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The Church's Task under the Roman Empire

FOUR LECTURES

WITH PREFACE, NOTES, AND AN EXCURSUS

BY

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PREFACE

THESE four Lectures, delivered in the Oxford Schools in the Michaelmas Term of 1904, are an attempt to sketch in broad outlines the nature of the task which lay before the Church when she set out in obedience to the divine call to evangelize the Graeco-Roman world, and the degree in which she was enabled to fulfil that task within the compass of the first five centuries.

It is far too large a subject for so small a volume. On very many points I have only been able to indicate the quarters where information is to be found, and the problems that court further investigation. When I have ventured to give my own opinion it has been done, not without consideration, but briefly and rather too much *ex cathedra*. The reader must allow for all this. I shall be quite content if the Lectures are found to promote in any degree what is in fact their main object.

What is that object? It is to direct attention to the extreme importance of studying the relation between the Empire and the Church even in those days which preceded the recognition of Christianity by Constantine, and, further, of ascertaining as clearly as

possible the condition, intellectual, moral, and material, of the people who filled the ranks of the Church.

These are in the main two aspects of the same question. If we knew exactly what the Empire was, and what it made of its subjects, we should know also what each individual Christian was, down to the moment of his conversion, and it would then be much easier to discern what change came over the man after his conversion.

For the first branch of this investigation there has been made, in recent times, an immense accumulation of material. The great march of public events remains still very much as it appears in the pages of Gibbon. But our knowledge of the causes of the events, which lie deep in the general condition of the people, has been enormously increased by epigraphy, archaeology, and palaeography. On the subject of education, clubs, the imperial finance, the imperial administration, town-government, changes in the army, the gradual intrusion of barbarians into the Empire, the rise and spread of villainage, we know far more than Gibbon, and every one of these is a cause with far-reaching results. Our notions of heathen religion, again, have been largely modified by the labours of M. Cumont and others, by the Egyptologists, and by the inscriptions. All this mass of new information is waiting to be drawn to a focus and appraised by the historian of the Church. Hitherto

we have seen the ancient world only as it was described for us by the great or by the hangers-on of the great. Now we can hear the voice of the common people. It is still not so full or articulate as we could wish, but it suffices to put the whole story in a new and more instructive light. Read, for instance, the panegyrics of Gibbon and Renan upon the philosophic Marcus Aurelius, and then turn to Schiller's account of the incapacity of the Emperor and the disasters of his reign.

Church history also has been mainly the history of the great, though their greatness was of a far nobler kind than that of Caesars or proconsuls. It has consisted mainly of the lives and actions of a handful of eminent clergymen. To a great extent this is unavoidable. The great bishops were the men who moulded the institutions, formulated the definitions, and exemplified the life of the Church. Yet it would be a great gain if by any means we could improve our acquaintance with the ordinary priest, or, still more, with the ordinary layman. For there can be little doubt that the most significant changes in history were not imposed upon the Church by the bishops from above, but forced upon the bishops by the pressure of popular opinion from below.

Now can we by any road find a way down to this underground still in which the Church of the New Testament was gradually transformed into the Church of the Middle Ages? To some extent we can. The

Canons will help us, and in this department we have received valuable assistance from the translation of the *Didascalia*, from the deciphering of the Verona Fragments of the *Didascalia*, and from the reconstruction of the *Canons of Hippolytus*. The principal writers do not as a rule give material assistance, but Tertullian supplies much useful information, while Clement and Origen would be of extraordinary service, if we only knew exactly whom they meant by the 'orthodoxasts' and the 'simpler brethren.' The Life of Gregory Thaumaturgus, by Gregory of Nyssa, is instructive. For the fourth and fifth centuries we have considerable information in the *Pilgrimage of Silvia*, if this is its right designation, in the *Lausiac History*, in Prudentius, the Life of St. Martin of Tours, the newly recovered treatises of Priscillian, the epistles and poems of Paulinus of Nola, and of Sidonius Apollinaris, the Life of Jerome, the works of Salvian. Again, there are the *Apocrypha*, the *Sibylline Oracles*, the Apocryphal Acts and Gospels. On the latter much study has recently been bestowed. We do not yet know accurately in what proportion they are Gnostic and in what proportion they are vulgar Christian. But they had considerable influence, and they throw much light upon ideas that were not unfamiliar in the lower strata of the Early Church, and were destined as time went on to take their place among recognized beliefs.

It would not be right to discourage the study of the great divines. Eminent personages are as important in ecclesiastical as in secular history, nay, they are even more important. But institutions grow like plants, not from the blossom, but from the roots. If we want to understand the making of the mediaeval Church we must go into the by-ways, we must listen not to the masters of theology, but to the Campanian farmer complaining to St. Felix of the theft of his oxen, and menacing the saint, if he does not make good the loss caused by his neglect.

These considerations suggest the natural reflection that there ought to be many more workers in the field of ecclesiastical history, and much more community of purpose between those who are engaged upon the work.

It is easy to see why it is not so. At present we are like the Crusaders attacking Saladin. We all fear the infidel, but we fear one another hardly less. 'King Richard,' says Geoffrey de Vinsauf, 'captured Messina by one assault in less time than a priest could chant the matin service. . . . And, lo, after this action had been performed, the French suddenly beheld the ensigns and standards of King Richard floating above the walls of the city; at which the King of France was so mortified, that he conceived that hatred against King Richard which lasted during his life, and afterwards led him to the unjust invasion

of Normandy.' Nor was this deep mutual distrust ill-grounded. Each of the rival kings was in truth playing his own game, and intended to make the Holy City, not the common property of all Christian people, but a French or an English Jerusalem.

Geoffrey might almost seem to be describing in an allegory the mutual relation of theological students in England of the present day. Every community likes to have its scholars, and treats them with great respect, but always on the tacit understanding that they score for their side and advertise the principles of their backers. They may be allowed to enter into some temporary coalition with their rivals, but in that case they must take great care who gets credit for planting the flag upon the walls of Messina.

It need hardly be pointed out what damage is done by this commercial or political temper to the interests of learning and even of truth. But surely there is no cure for the mischief at all equal to the scholarly study of history. It has been called, by a master of the craft, the great cordial, but it is also the great peacemaker. No one can travel down the long river of time with a scholar's eye, a scholar's reverence for fact, and a scholar's trained discernment, without coming to feel how trivial are the little inferences that part him from his fellow believers, in comparison with the great axioms in which all are agreed.

It has been maintained, even in recent times and

by men of intelligence, that impartiality in a Church historian is neither possible, desirable, nor lawful. No doubt all men do bring to their studies certain prepossessions; and it may be allowed that in the field of religion these prepossessions are more numerous and powerful than elsewhere. We all have our personal equations. But it does not follow that we ought to be steeped to the lips in prejudice. We do not think that a secular historian cannot love his own country if he is critical, or if he does not undervalue the laws and the exploits of other peoples. Why then should we think that the ecclesiastical historian cannot love his own Church if he too admits that institutions were made for men, and not men for institutions?

The critical temper is not the same as the controversial. But neither is criticism the same thing as indifferentism. It is probable that the most thorough and scientific study of the *origines* of the church would not greatly affect existing divisions of opinion; at any rate it would not obliterate the main lines of cleavage. But it would materially change our attitude towards these divisions by enlarging charity. It would deepen the spiritual life, for there is nothing more injurious to the soul than the habit of sectarian animosity. Finally, it would greatly promote the increase of knowledge if there were more workers in the field of ecclesiastical history, and if all were

drawn together in the bond of a common love of truth.

It was hoped last spring that some movement in this direction might have been facilitated by the proposal to abolish the existing restrictions upon the selection of Examiners in the Honour School of Theology. The teaching body of Oxford sanctioned the proposal, but Convocation rejected it after a scene which will not readily be forgotten by those who had the misfortune to witness it. But the library is secure from these noisy invasions; and much might be done in that peaceful atmosphere.

There is room for workers of every shade of opinion, provided only that they are competent and that they are unselfish. As has already been said, there is little fear that their labours would end in bringing us all to a dead level of uniformity, or in clothing all minds in grey. But they might take the sting out of our differences of opinion. They might show us that intolerance is not the necessary ally of conviction, and teach us the lesson which Constantine the Great vainly endeavoured to impress upon the old Novatian, when he said to him in his pleasant ironical way, 'Take a ladder, Acesius, and climb to heaven by yourself.'

There are a few words more that may here be added. The study of the great Greek and Roman moralists of the Empire leaves upon my own mind

a strong conviction that the fundamental difference between heathenism of all shades and Christianity is to be discovered in the doctrine of Vicarious Sacrifice, that is to say, in the Passion of our Lord. The thought was in my mind all the time that I was composing these lectures, but it does not appear clearly, if at all, in the text.

If we ask what is *das Wesen des Christenthums*, this is surely the same thing as asking what is the specific difference between Christianity and any other religion. The old logicians used to say that everything should be defined *per genus et differentiam.* Christianity is a religion; this is its *genus*, this it has in common with all other religions. It is the religion of Vicarious Sacrifice, or of the Cross, this is its *differentia*; in this addition lies the peculiar nature which makes it what it is, and distinguishes it from every other member of the same class.

Now the Fatherhood of God, the immortality of the soul, revelation, are beliefs common to many religions. So again are sacrifice, prophecy, law. The belief that by virtue men become like God, children of God, and attain to communion with their divine Father is a commonplace of Greek idealism, and is found in many of the better pagan cults. The idea of a Messiah, again, is common to Judaism and Christianity, and something not wholly unlike it meets us in the 'inspired men' of Platonism, or the 'heroes' of

Hellenism. But the Cross is the peculiar property of the Gospel. What the first Christians adopted as their emblem was not the portrait of Jesus, but simply the Cross, without any portrait at all.

It may be said that this peculiar feature of the Christian faith throws back light upon, and gives new meaning and new shape to all the other articles of our religion. From this source flow all the distinctive beliefs and practices of the Church, which, though all, or almost all, common in some degree to other religions, have received a specially Christian form and development from this central doctrine. It has affected, for instance, very deeply indeed even the conception of God.

If we look at the great Stoic doctors we shall find in them an admirable account of duty, so admirable indeed that it was largely adopted by Christian teachers. The Stoic set a very high value upon the individual soul, its wisdom, its purity, its freedom. He preached even self-denial, in the sense of self-limitation, or renunciation of all that turns a man away from the pursuit of a high ideal. He taught courage also and the endurance of suffering, so long as it did not appear to the man himself to be irremediable or excessive; otherwise he held that suicide was right. But attention has been directed in one of the following lectures to the harsh contempt with which Epictetus speaks of women and children. It would hardly have been fair to do so if this scorn had

been a personal trait belonging to Epictetus himself. But it is not so; it flows quite naturally from his system. Epictetus did not like women and children, because they bored him, and he did not see why he should be bored. These weaker vessels take from the wise man, and give nothing in return. They are a clog upon one who pursues inner perfection and tranquillity. It never for a moment occurred to Epictetus that man becomes better not by self-cultivation, but by making others better, or, in other words, that the voluntary suffering of the good lifts up the bad and makes the good better than he was.

The Platonists were much more humane, and allowed much more scope for the natural affections, which always entail more or less of self-sacrifice. They did not regard the world as an enemy to be kept at bay; it was in their opinion a divinely-appointed place of discipline, and for this reason they shrank from suicide. They offered to mankind all that Idealism has to teach. Even Hegel adds nothing substantial to Plotinus, and their system of doctrine was so like that of the Church that it has been doubted, not without reason, whether Dionysius the Areopagite and Synesius of Cyrene were at bottom anything more than Neoplatonists. Nevertheless, they also were brought up by precisely the same fence as the Stoics. They held that self-cultivation and the divine blessing are the two things necessary.

They came nearer to the fence than the Stoics, and admitted that one man must show the way to another, not so much by words as by personal influence. Divine philosophy is 'like a light kindled in the soul by a darting fire,' by much conversation about the thing itself and by living with the wise (Plato, *Ep.* vii, p. 341 C, D: this was a very famous and influential text). But, when once kindled, the light must 'feed itself.' They would not admit that the undeserved voluntary suffering of one could make another better. Plotinus expressly rejects the idea as immoral, though he must have had a mother. It seemed to him inconceivable that it should be the duty of a good man to give up any portion of his spiritual wealth for the relief of the poor, to make himself worse in order that others might be better. In fact, with him, as with the Stoic, the ultimate formula is 'my soul and God.' Whereas with the Christian it is 'my soul, my brother's soul, and God.'

The same thing is true of the pagan religion. Some exception must be made in favour of the new Oriental cults. The worshippers of Isis and of Mithra used the term 'brethren,' a fact of great significance, and were in consequence missionaries. The imperial world was groping its way towards this great idea. Still, it may be said with confidence that the contents, the power, the sanction of this idea were the property of the Church alone, which taught that no man could

be Christ's disciple without bearing the Cross of Christ, that every man must do for his brethren what Christ did for all, 'empty himself,' become poor and a slave, make himself what a heathen philosopher or a heathen pro-consul would have thought a very inferior creature.

The speculative consequences of this faith in the Cross need not here be explained; they were naturally very great. But the moral consequences also are enormous. It shifts the centre of gravity, and alters everything from top to bottom. It is of course an enthusiasm, and therefore liable to great extravagances and mistakes. Further, being the highest of all moral laws, it is naturally also the most difficult to assimilate, especially for ignorant and undisciplined people, such as were probably the great mass of the converts to Christianity. There are many traces of these shortcomings in the early history of the Church, which ought not to be blinked. They are no reproach to our fathers, but they are a warning to ourselves.

The old Gnostics called the Cross 'Horos,' the Boundary or Dividing Line. The Gnostics were a curious people, but they were right here. On this side of the Cross all history is, or ought to be, a different thing to what it is on the other, and every one who carries the Cross, in so far as he carries it, is a better citizen, a better philosopher, and a better man than he would have been otherwise.

C. BIGG.

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I

EDUCATION UNDER THE EMPIRE

It is impossible to form a just estimate of ecclesiastical history without a clear conception of the Roman Empire within whose shelter the Church was born and grew to maturity. When the Western Empire fell before the arms of the barbarian invaders the Church had assumed in all essential respects the shape which she retained down to the time of the Reformation. We can hardly doubt that this shape was given to her with a view to that society which it was her divine mission to transform.

Let me endeavour then in these four Lectures to sketch the inner life of the Empire under the three great heads of Education, Religion, and Morality.

One great difficulty, which cannot be wholly overcome, meets us at the outset. We are apt to speak of heathenism in the abstract in antithesis to the Gospel. But the sharp antagonisms of language do not exist in nature. There were innumerable gradations of heathenism ranging from the lowest to all but the highest phase of the religious life, from Druidism and Moloch worship, and from even lower depths, up to the enlightened theism of Epictetus or Plotinus.

Historians, again, speak of Greco-Roman culture as if there was one definite thing answering to the name. But what we actually find is the most amazing disparity. Between the highest and the lowest of the subjects of Caesar there was no less difference than there is to-day between an Englishman and a Kaffir. Yet further, men of every race, every colour, every degree of civilization, dwelt not only within the same Empire, but within the same walls. Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, jostled one another in the streets of Rome. Great nobles, learned scholars, experienced men of affairs, admirable artists, skilful artisans, lived in the same city, under the same roof, with fierce and ignorant savages from the mountains of Morocco or the wilds of Britain. Year by year, so long as the Empire endured, the tide of barbarian immigrants increased till at last in the West it completely submerged the older population. This gradual deterioration of the mass of its inhabitants is the significant feature of the later history of Rome. It set the Empire its task, and fixed the limits of its success. When such hosts of rude pupils were swarming up from below, the great schoolmistress could do no more than impart the first lessons of humanity. Thus, while the area of civilization increased, its depth diminished.

But, infinitely various as were the pupils, the system of education was one and the same. It will not be possible for me, nor indeed is it necessary for my

purpose, to speak of special professional training, of the higher mathematics, or philosophy, or medicine, or jurisprudence. There were places where instruction of this kind could be procured by those who desired it —Rome, Athens, Alexandria, Berytus, Constantinople[1]. But we may leave them out of the account. Education, as the word was understood by the vast majority of the ancients, means the discipline of the grammar

[1] The University towns of the Empire were Athens, Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople. Here everything might be studied. Our information about Athens is pretty copious; see Lucian, *Nigrinus* and *Eunuchus*; Aulus Gellius; Philostratus; Eunapius; Gregory Nazianzen; Marinus, *Life of Proclus*; Synesius, *Ep.* 136. It has been put together with great skill by Mr. Capes in his *University Life in Ancient Athens*. Alexandria was predominantly scientific and medical. The student may read G. Parthey, *Das Alexandrinische Museum*. Mommsen, *Die Provinzen*, has something on the subject. For Rome, see *Cod. Theod.* xiv. 9. 1 with Godefroi's notes; for Constantinople, *Cod. Theod.* xiv. 9. 2, 3. Berytus was specially a law school. Gregory Thaumaturgus was on his way thither when he was captured by Origen. Mr. Glover, *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century*, would add Bordeaux and Carthage to the list of Universities. The professors celebrated by Ausonius were all rhetoricians or grammarians, but he ends by saying that he may have omitted some whom 'medicae vel artis dogma, vel Platonicum, Dedit perenni gloriae.' St. Augustine learned no philosophy at Carthage except what he picked up by himself, but it would appear from *Conf.* iv. 16 that there were lectures on the *Categories* of Aristotle. Generally speaking, philosophy appears to have been reserved for what we may call post-graduate study, which was carried on between the ages of twenty and thirty. Hence very few can have had more than a very superficial acquaintance with the subject. Even at Rome and Athens rhetoric was the main preoccupation.

and the rhetoric schools. Let us fix our eyes then upon these institutions, and see what they professed and what they accomplished. In the time of Horace, and throughout the first century, they were what we should call private schools. From the second century onwards they assume a public character; and teachers were appointed and paid by the state or the municipality. Grammar schools[1] were to be found everywhere, and every township of any importance possessed also teachers of rhetoric.

In the Grammar School the ages of the pupils ranged from about seven to about fourteen. The course of instruction began with reading, writing, and ciphering, and in poor out-of-the-way places probably did not go much beyond these elementary accomplishments. But in the better class of school these rudiments, of course, were merely the foundation for lessons of a more advanced kind. These included music, mathematics (arithmetic and geometry), and

[1] For the Schools our principal sources of information are Quintilian, Horace, Petronius, Juvenal, Suetonius, Aulus Gellius, Fronto, Macrobius, Ausonius, St. Augustine's *Confessions*, Eumenius. Of modern books the following may be mentioned—Friedländer, *Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte Roms*, Leipzig, 1881 (there is a later edition of this work, published in 1901, but it supplies no references); Boissier, *Fin du Paganisme*; Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*; Glover, *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century*. Of the Grammar School proper in the eastern parts of the Empire there appears to be little or no direct information. In the following paragraphs Quintilian has been very closely followed.

as much science and philosophy as was necessary for the proper understanding of the classic authors. But the main subject, which gave its name to both schoolmaster and school, was Grammar.

Grammar included not merely syntax and accidence, but the history and morphology of language, as far as these subjects were at the time understood. Indeed, its scope was much broader than anything that we understand by the term. In the mind of Quintilian, or of any other ancient professor, Grammar means nothing less than literary criticism, as that phrase was employed by Mark Pattison or Matthew Arnold. It aimed at forming judgement and taste, and strove to equip the opening intelligence of the pupil with all knowledge that would enable him to appraise the absolute or the comparative merits of the books read in class. For this purpose he was led on through a carefully selected list of authors, poets, orators, and historians, beginning with Aesop's *Fables* and ending in Livy, Cicero, Virgil, Demosthenes, and Homer. Every author was carefully explained by the master. The pupils were required to read aloud clearly, correctly, and with proper dramatic expression, to scan the verses, to learn by heart and repeat from memory, to paraphrase selected passages in their own words, to amplify and elaborate traits which seemed capable of expansion.

It was an admirable system, probably much better

than any to be found in our own schools down to the time of Dr. Arnold. But there are two criticisms that suggest themselves.

The first is this. In all Western schools Greek was taught as well as Latin. But apparently Latin was not taught in Eastern schools[1]. Even in the West boys rebelled against the foreign language, just as English boys rebel against French or German. St. Augustine and the poet Ausonius both make the same confession, that they had acquired a very limited acquaintance with the language of Homer[2], and we may judge from this how little progress was made by lads of less intelligence. The consequence was that the two halves of the old world never thoroughly understood one another, and in this fact we may discover a leading cause of the disruption of the Empire and of the disruption of the Church. A most interesting and instructive lecture might be written on the confusion, the misunderstandings, the quarrels that arose between theologians from this little simple reason, that the Easterns could not speak Latin and the Westerns could not speak Greek.

The second is this. The Grammar School was dominated by the school of Rhetoric. From the very first, Quintilian tells us, the Grammarian must keep

[1] See Glover, pp. 33, 50.

[2] For Ausonius, see the sapphics addressed to the Greek Grammarians at Bordeaux. For St. Augustine, *Conf.* i. 14.

steadily before his eyes the object for which he exists —that of turning out orators. It is from this point of view alone that he regards Music as valuable. It teaches the management and production of the voice, the emotional value of the various notes or keys, and grace of gesture. Mathematics are judged by the same rule. Barristers must be proficient at figures because they will have to deal with sums of money, and for a further reason which strikes us moderns as peculiar. Figures were expressed not only by word of mouth, but by accompanying movements of the fingers, and it was therefore highly desirable that the pleader should have been trained to make these signs correctly and gracefully. History, again, was hardly taught except in its literary aspect, as helping in the formation of a good narrative style. The master, says Quintilian, should not trouble himself with pedantic accuracy in matters of fact. One of the virtues of a grammarian is *aliqua nescire*. But we shall have to recur to this point later on. Let us only notice here that the system of the schools did not aim at scientific results of any kind. The judgement which it endeavoured to form was entirely aesthetic.

The Grammar School was a powerful agent in the diffusion of Roman culture; and under the Empire the system was extended with great rapidity into the most distant parts of the provinces. In Southern Gaul both grammar and rhetoric were taught from

a very early date at Marseilles, Autun, Lyons, and Bordeaux. Later on we read of flourishing schools at Toulouse, Narbonne, Trèves, and in all the chief cities of the Gallic provinces. The famous Agricola, who had received his own education at Marseilles, established Roman schools for the sons of the native chieftains in newly conquered Britain[1], and Juvenal tells us in his hyperbolical way that even Thule, the unknown North, is beginning to talk of hiring a professor of rhetoric[2]. Spain also was covered with schools. Even little mining villages in the south of Portugal were not left unprovided[3], and Augustine shows us that in Africa the same state of things existed. Everywhere the schoolmaster followed the standard, and the subdued barbarian was carefully drilled in the arts of peace.

The proficiency attained would naturally vary very greatly according to local circumstances. In a little Italian town probably nearly everybody could read and write, and knew a little poetry. We have proof

[1] Tac. *Agricola*, 21. Cp. Martial, xi. 3. 5 'Dicitur et nostros cantare Britannia versus.'

[2] *Sat.* xv. 112.

[3] In 1876 there was discovered near the little town of Aljustrel in Portugal, in a mountainous region, a tablet of bronze covered with a long Latin inscription. It contains an ordinance for the regulation of the mining industry in the district, and speaks of schoolmasters, to whom certain immunities are granted. See Boissier, *Fin du Paganisme*, vol. i. p. 152; Hübner et Mommsen, 'Lex metalli Vipascensis,' *Eph. epigr.* iii. 165–189.

of this in the *graffiti* scrawled on the walls of Pompeii, which were clearly addressed to the vulgarest of the people, and often contain verses of the classic poets. The epitaphs, again, tell the same tale. Many of them are adorned with scraps of Virgil or Propertius, often sadly mangled by ignorant admirers. In Egypt the papyri discover to us a condition of general education which is certainly not worse than that of our own countrymen in the eighteenth century. The admirably edited *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, for which we owe our warmest thanks to Dr. Grenfell and Dr. Hunt, contain a letter from a little boy to his father which is quite as good as anything that an English child could write. Many of the documents are ill-spelt and ungrammatical, and we find frequent notice of people who could only make their marks [1]. But the proportion of illiterates does not seem to be larger than could be found in the marriage registers of an English country parish a hundred years ago, and it must be remembered that in Egypt Greek was a foreign language. Among the clergy of the Church the standard of education was not

[1] In the first volume of the *Oxy. Pap.* the following instances of illiteracy occur in documents of the first four centuries—no. 43, a petty town official; no. 53, a carpenter; nos. 67, 69, two small farmers; no. 72, a small owner of property; nos. 76, 77, two women of property; no. 83, an egg seller; no. 85, two workmen out of several; no. 86, the wife of the pilot of a boat; no. 91, a woman who had put her child out to nurse, and the owner of the slave who acted as wet-nurse; no. 101, a person who farmed thirty-eight arouras of land; no. 106, a lady who made a will.

high. St. Cyprian ordained as *Lector* a confessor who could not write, but apparently could read [1], and about the same time (in the middle of the third century) the *Didascalia* informs us that even bishops were often unlearned men [2]. Some of the Fathers of the Desert knew no Greek, and some could not write [3]; and no doubt in all the outlying provinces there were numbers of people who could speak nothing but their native tongue. But, wherever Latin and Greek were understood, the influence of the Grammar School was deep and permanent. The Fathers of the Western Church, generally speaking, knew Virgil by heart, and in the East, Homer was equally familiar.

From the Grammar School the more capable and aspiring or wealthier students passed on to the School of Rhetoric. Here they remained till about the age of twenty, and here the process of education in the vast majority of cases reached its end. Here, then, we shall see most clearly the intention of the whole system. It was to produce not students, nor men of any special technical aptitude, but the accomplished gentleman, who is adorned with that fine flower of

[1] Cyp. *Epp.* xxvii, xxxviii (ed. Hartel).

[2] Achelis and Flemming, *Die syrische Didaskalia*, p. 13; Mrs. Gibson, *The Didascalia Apostolorum*, p. 23.

[3] Apollonius could not write, *Hist. Laus.*, ed. Butler, xiii. John of Lycopolis conversed with Evagrius by means of an interpreter, ibid. xxxv. Antony also could not speak Greek, and used an interpreter, ibid. xxi, ad fin.

cultivation which the Romans called 'Urbanity[1],' and in all social relations knows how to say the right thing in the right way. For such a purpose the main requisites are self-possession, and the command of speech, and these the rhetorician undertook to supply. In the senate, at the bar, at the banquet-table, on the tribunal, at any festival, in any assembly of the people, or on any of those deputations which the provincials were perpetually sending up to Rome, a man of any consideration was called upon to talk, and to talk well, about every subject under the sun. The business of the rhetorician was to show him how the thing was done.

When a boy entered the School of Rhetoric, though he continued to read much the same authors, he began to study them from a new point of view, not that of matter or style, but that of oratorical effective-

[1] *Urbanitas* is defined by Quintilian (vi. 3 ad in.) as 'a certain peculiar flavour of the City, an implication of culture (*tacita eruditio*) derived from conversation with men of letters.' It involved nicety of expression, judgement, taste, pleasantness—what the Greek meant by Atticism. The French *esprit* has much the same signification, but in the eyes of a Roman the proper field of display was, not the drawing-room, but the senate or the bar. How delicate was the sense of propriety of speech appears from the fact that Livy was blamed for *Patavinitas*. The meaning of this criticism may perhaps be found in the fact that fashion was turning towards the archaic Latin of the Republic. Fronto (iv. 3) blames even Cicero, Quintilian's idol, because he does not use 'insperata atque inopinata verba.' The great classics were not exquisite and affected enough for the taste of the second century.

ness. Henceforth he was to consider not what a writer says, but by what means he produces, or why he fails to produce, the desired effect on the mind of the reader. For the more advanced students theory went hand in hand with practice ; one or more of the many excellent Manuals of Rhetoric, or *Artes* as they were called, was minutely studied, and afforded a scientific basis for the new curriculum. But the characteristic feature of the high school was the Theme or Declamation, original production written or spoken, written always with a view to being spoken.

The subjects were carefully graduated according to the age and progress of the pupil. He began with simple essays in narrative and proceeded at the next stage to discuss the probability of historical statements —whether it is really credible that Romulus and Remus were suckled by a she-wolf, or that Messalla Corvinus was enabled to defeat the gigantic Gaul by the friendly aid of a crow. From this he advanced to comparison, and was made to ask himself, for instance, whether Livy's account of Hannibal's passage of the Alps is to be preferred to that of other historians or not. The next step brought him to the discussion of moral questions, in which the same order was observed. First come the facts. These were given in the highly important Common Places.

The Common Places, which lie at the root of ancient rhetoric, included in the first place abstract

sketches of character, such as those drawn by Aristotle or Theophrastus, or indeed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Bishop Earle and William Law. These characters, often acute and amusing, but always abstract and conventional, were learned by heart, and formed the stock in trade of the ancient orator or dramatist. From them come the well-known figures of the ancient stage, the severe or lenient father, the miser, the young rake, the cunning slave, and all the rest of that amusing company. Some of them are pleasant, others are extremely unpleasant. It is noticeable that those selected by the moral Quintilian, as calling for especial study, are all unpleasant. They are those of the adulterer, the dicer, and the rake. He tells his pupils that they must be ready to speak not only against such people, but on their behalf. No doubt he is thinking mainly of the barrister, who will have to defend as well as to prosecute, but we may find here a striking proof of the way in which the Rhetoric School uniformly subordinated morality to effect.

The next step led on to ethical comparisons—whether town or country life is the happier, whether sword or gown is the more glorious, and so forth ; the next to deliberation—ought a man to marry, ought he to seek magistracies ; this last is a theme that equipped the budding orator for invectives against the Church, for it was a common complaint against Christians that

they declined to take office under the pagan state; the next again to what are called conjectural cases, such as the question why Cupid is depicted as a boy armed with torch and arrows, on which free scope is given for the exercise of fancy or imagination. Finally, the learner was carried on to problems of standing interest for the Law Court or the Senate—when are witnesses credible? what is the value of circumstantial proof? what is the difference between good laws and bad?

All these were Common Places reduced to formulae, illustrated by apt quotations and then learned by heart, needing nothing but a few names and details to fit them on to any case that might arise. There was no need for any one to think about them; there they were stereotyped and ready for use. On each of these topics the pupils wrote and declaimed without cessation. Every care was taken to cure stage-fright and ensure an effective delivery. Not a point was left unregulated; there were minute rules as to the use of the pocket-handkerchief, and professors were divided on the question how far the hair might be tumbled when the orator was simulating passion. Once a week there was a speech-day[1], when parents and friends came in numbers to see for themselves

[1] Juv. vii. 160 'Cuius mihi sexta Quaque die miserum dirus caput Hannibal implet'; Quint. ii. 7 'Ne omnia, quae scripserint, ediscant, et certa, ut moris est, die dicant; quod quidem maxime patres exigunt'; Suet. *Tib.* 32 'Diogenes grammaticus, disputare sabbatis Rhodi solitus'; Persius, iii. 44.

how their boys were getting on. Thus emulation and ambition were excited to what St. Augustine thought a very mischievous extent [1]. Many epitaphs on young children show us what pride and delight Roman fathers and mothers drew from the progress of their sons and daughters in the exercises of the school [2].

Many of the themes have a certain historical interest, like the examples given in the old Eton Latin Grammar [3]. Two subjects, often declaimed upon in the early days of the Empire, were the abdication of Sulla and the lawfulness of tyrannicide. We see here how, in a time when there were no radical journals, the Stoic malcontents contrived to utilize the schools in their hopeless crusade against Caesarism. Later on the themes become exclusively moral. Many of them would furnish excellent arguments for a melodrama or a problem novel. Let us take this one. A young man captured by a pirate is set free by the pirate's lovely daughter, like Lord Bateman in the ballad. He promises her marriage,

[1] *Conf.* i. 17.

[2] *CIL.* vi. 3. 20133 'puero studiosissimo'; viii. 1. 724, on a lad of seventeen, 'qui dixi, scribsi, pincsi bene,' he knew Greek also; on a girl of eight, 'Quodsi longa tuae mansissent tempora vitae Doctior in terris nulla puella foret' (I omitted to take down the number of this).

[3] 'Expedit reipublicae animadverti in malos' referred to the execution of Empson and Dudley by Henry VIII; 'Audito regem Doroberniam proficisci' to the meeting of the King and the Emperor at Dover.

goes home, and there discovers that his stern parent has arranged that he shall give his hand to a wealthy widow. Ought he to keep his word or not[1]? Or again: a band of students go down to Ostia for a holiday. Some fishermen are putting off in their boats; the students agree to give them a guinea for their catch. The fishermen let down their net, and bring up a basket full of gold coins. Is this 'a catch,' or not? Several of these rhetorical themes were actually worked up into romances, and, as the *Gesta Romanorum*, formed the favourite reading of light-hearted people in the Middle Ages[2]. They were gushing, sentimental and risky, but things generally come right in the end. They were more like Richardson than the modern French novel.

Time forbids me to dwell at any length upon the products of the system—the professional rhetorician, who was prepared to speak at any moment, or any length, upon any subject that his auditors liked to suggest; the swarm of minor poets who scribbled verses even in the hunting-field, and compared one another to Catullus or even Virgil; the barristers, of whom the good ones, like Pliny, were much more anxious about the turn of their sentences than about the justice of their cause, while the bad ones, like

[1] Seneca, *Controv.* i. 6. But see Friedländer, who gives a full and interesting collection of themes.

[2] Friedländer, iii. p. 248 (ed. 1881).

Regulus, were not satisfied with hunting down the victims of the Emperor's displeasure, but used every art to draw the friends, relatives, advocates of the accused into the net of destruction. All this you may read in Pliny's Letters, or in Mr. Capes' excellent little book on *University Life in Ancient Athens.* What strikes us as remarkable is that these finicking and often very vicious *dilettanti* were the governors and administrators of the whole civilized world. Under the early Empire the enervating effect of the school training was to a considerable extent obviated by later practical discipline. The *cursus honorum*, or system of promotion[1], required that the young aspirant, upon leaving the rhetorical school, should first of all apply for one of the inferior judicial or administrative offices. Then he underwent a period of military service, then he was raised to the higher magistracies, involving important civil functions and the command of legions or armies, until at last, as praetor or consul, he became governor of a province. But gradually the civil and military careers were entirely dissociated, and from this time onwards the really important officials had no training at all except that of the bureau. The same division of function prevails in modern nations. But the result of the separation must be greatly to increase the influence

[1] See on this subject Pelham, *Outlines of Roman History*, vi. 1; Friedländer; Seeck, *Untergang der antiken Welt.*

of the school, and we may say that the Roman school was much fitter to produce amateur actors than efficient servants of the State.

Such was the ideal of Education; rather stagey, we may think, and thin, wanting in solidity, and concerned far more with words than with things, but admirably calculated to spread a rapid varnish of refinement over the coarsest natural grain. Let us now look at the persons by whom the system was administered.

First in order comes the Nurse[1], who seems to have had exclusive charge of the little children. She was a slave, as devoted as an Indian ayah, but extremely unfit for the moral direction of infant minds. Lying was the taint of her class, and she was steeped as a matter of course in the grossest and most horrible superstition.

Next comes the Pedagogue, another slave. He was half valet, half tutor; his duties were to act as body-servant, to convey his young master to and from school, and to see that the tasks were properly prepared. During lesson-time he sat at the back of

[1] Quintilian thought it desirable that the nurse should be able to speak correctly, but makes no other stipulation, i. 20. Many of the epitaphs are inscribed by the nurse to the child, or by the child to the nurse. Clement of Alexandria quotes a Greek couplet, *τὸ θρέψαι δ' ἐν βροτοῖσι πολλάκις πλείω πορίζει φίλτρα τοῦ φῦσαι τέκνα*, *Paed.* i. 6. 49. *CIL.* vi. 4. 3442, we have a pathetic epitaph on a little girl. Besides the parents are named five persons 'qui eam nutrierunt in diem mortis eius.' For nursery superstitions see Persius, ii. 31 sqq.; Aug. *Conf.* i. 7.

the class-room. In this way he sometimes managed to pick up an education for himself. Then, when he had received the cap of liberty, he would not uncommonly set up school on his own account.

We must remember, of course, that the Roman slave was sometimes equal in birth and race, and often far superior in intelligence and accomplishments to his master. Some of these pedagogues were excellent men, for instance, Mardonius the Scythian, for whom Julian the Apostate always cherished a grateful affection. But, even when they were decent people, they were compelled to pander to the vices of their owners. There is an instructive scene in one of the comedies of Plautus, where a pedagogue Lydus ventures to give his master a little moral advice. The young rake cuts him short with the fierce question, 'Am I your slave or are you mine?' and poor Lydus has no choice but to hold his tongue, and do what he is bid[1]. In modern times we regard self-control as one of the chief fruits of education. Seneca assures us that at Rome it was quite otherwise; the rich and refined were the most passionate. The reason he gives is that they had been brought up by slave-nurses and pedagogues who lived in constant dread of the scourge, and found their interest in ministering to the depravity of their young charges[2].

The character and status of the *Doctor* improved

[1] *Bacch.* i. 2.

[2] *De Ira*, ii. 21.

greatly as education became more of a public concern. The Orbilius of Horace was an old soldier, and many other schoolmasters at that time were men who had failed in other vocations. The best teachers of the first century were almost invariably freedmen, and generally Greeks; though there were exceptions, for instance the elder Statius, a Roman of good standing and high character, who kept a flourishing boarding-school at Capua. From the second century the private school tends to disappear, and the masters are selected and paid by the town council, in some cases by the Emperor himself. There was thus a great change for the better in the conditions of the profession. The teachers in the high school of Bordeaux in the time of Ausonius held a good social position, married rich wives, and were often promoted to high rank in the civil service. Yet about the same time Augustine, who was at first a private teacher, complains that his pupils cheated him out of his fees; and Libanius of Antioch, who was paid, or ought to have been paid, by the town council, tells us that, when he sees the baker go past his lodging, he wants to run after the man, because he is starving, but dare not, because he owes him money. Town councillors were often irregular paymasters, for the best of reasons, because they were ruined themselves.

There were, no doubt, grammarians and rhetoricians who took a low view of their duties, but this was not

generally the case. Quintilian was an excellent man. He adopts as his own the definition of old Cato, that the orator is *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, 'a good man who knows how to speak'; and goes on to insist that he ought to be not only virtuous but religious. He was deeply interested in the morals of the young people committed to his charge, and doubtless there were many like him. As a rule, we may think, the teacher did his best to shape the character of his pupils. Something he could accomplish no doubt, but he must have found it hard to counteract the influence of the nurse, the pedagogue, and the parents. The last, Quintilian tells us, was often the worst of the three. He paints the evil example often set to the children at home in very dark colours, though he is no satirist[1]. We may remember that he lived in the first century, which was an exceptional time, and that he is speaking of the Roman nobility.

When we come to think over the history of the ancient schools, we begin to perceive that they succeeded admirably in one great object, and failed lamentably in two others. They drew together in most powerful bands the heterogeneous elements of which the Empire was composed. Even in this

[1] 'Verba, ne Alexandrinis quidem permittenda deliciis, risu et osculo excipimus: nec mirum: nos docuimus, ex nobis audierunt. Nostras amicas, nostros concubinos vident: omne convivium obscenis canticis strepit: pudenda dictu spectantur,' i. 2.

respect their work was not quite accomplished; East and West never became really one. But in the West the schools created and established that sentiment which later writers call *Romania*[1], a proud and elevated patriotism, uniting Briton, Gaul, Spaniard, and African by a tie as strong as that of blood, and teaching them to look upon the Eternal City no longer as their tyrant but as the great mother, whose glories were their own. But they aimed at producing good officials; and the officials whom they sent forth in crowds from their class-rooms were corrupt, insolent, servile, and incapable. They aimed also at producing poets, historians, orators, and men of letters. Yet the more they perfected their system, the more did art and learning decline. Seeck[2] finds a reason for this rapid decay of intelligence in what he calls 'the Extermination of the Best,' and consequent survival of the unfittest. There is something in this explanation. Proscriptions, wars, conspiracies, plagues, natural and political catastrophes swept away great numbers of brave and capable men. But there were more serious causes at work. The ideas that governed the schools were really extinct; their political no less than their religious creed was a thing of the

[1] The sentiment is finely expressed by the pagan Claudian, *de cons. Stil.* iii. 150–159; and by the Christian Orosius, *Hist.* v. 2. The word *Romania* appears for the first time in Orosius, iii. 20 and vii. 43; in the latter passage he says that it is a vulgar phrase.

[2] *Untergang der antiken Welt.*

past; Camillus and Cincinnatus were not examples from whom the youth of Lyons or Thagaste could drink inspiration, and the gods of the Capitol were not their gods. And there were no new ideas to take the place of the old. Science made no progress, and literature and art had been brought to a pitch of perfection which could not be surpassed without striking out an entirely new line. It is clear enough to us, as we look back, where the land of promise lay. The classic writers addressed themselves to their noble patrons, who knew nature only as they saw it from the windows of a palace, in carefully trimmed parks and pleasaunces, and looked down with infinite scorn upon the simple ways of obscure men and women. What was wanted was a literature of the people. There were plenty of men who might have written it; but they were condemned to silence, partly by the tyranny of this windy vapouring rhetoric, partly by the grinding oppression of the bureaucratic government. The first ray of hope is to be found in the Christian Church, which thought more of nature than of convention, more of the little than of the great, which in art substituted the beauty of colour for the beauty of line and form[1], in prose

[1] The reader should consult Gregorovius, *Rome in the Middle Ages*, Eng. trans., vol. i. p. 82 sqq. Gregorovius calls mosaic 'essentially the art of decadence—the gilt flower of barbarism.' I would not venture to express an opinion on a disputed point of

the simple pathos of the martyrology for the tinsel pomp of the panegyric, and in poetry the hymn for the ode. There was plenty of ability, if it could have been guided in the right direction and provided with a career. The *Hymn of the Soul* in the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*, written by some nameless Syrian Gnostic, is marked by an imaginative power and freshness which we should seek in vain in any classical piece of the second or third centuries.

But for the ecclesiastical historian the most interesting matter is the relation of the schools to the Church.

It will have been seen that rhetoric was not a good training for political wisdom, for practical capacity, or for moral seriousness and insight; and further, that it was deeply attached to that glorious past, which formed the whetstone for its voluble tongue. We shall not therefore be surprised to find rhetors,

aesthetics. But it may be said with confidence that colour is more democratic than sculpture; it appeals more to the emotions and less to the intelligence. Further Gregorovius makes the important remark that while the inside of the Constantinian churches was richly adorned, the outside was left bald and unattractive. Decoration superseded architecture. Whereas with the heathen temple the case was just the reverse. These changes are highly significant. The church was not a public monument, but a shelter for devout spirits; you must enter into the shrine to see its beauty, and the life therein fostered is that of contemplation and adoration, not that of civic ambition. The art was doubtless inferior, because it was nascent. But it was inspired by a new motive, Romanticism, and this eventually gave birth to new forms of beauty in every department.

men like Fronto, Aristides, Hierocles, among the bitterest enemies of the new faith, which, as we may see from Clement of Alexandria, heartily reciprocated their dislike.

This, however, is a small point. Far more important is the effect of rhetorical training upon the Church from within. Let us remember that every Christian child, who received any education at all, passed through these schools[1], that the system was purely secular, and down to the fall of the Empire, long after the accession of Constantine, was administered by teachers who were very commonly pagan, and

[1] Tertullian, *de Idol.* x, strenuously insisted that no Christian could be a schoolmaster; but even he did not go so far as to maintain that Christian children ought not to attend school. The *Canons of Hippolytus*, which probably belong to the same age as Tertullian, allow a converted grammarian to exercise his function on condition that, before lessons begin, he shall say aloud 'Non est deus nisi pater et filius et spiritus sanctus.' He is recommended also to use his influence as teacher for religious purposes; it is a merit if he can draw his pupils over to the true faith (ed. Achelis, p. 81). Julian's edict excluding Christians from the right to teach was resented naturally as a gross injustice, but its main effect was to deprive a number of good men of the means of getting a livelihood. St. Augustine in his *Confessions* criticizes the methods of the schools with severity, but does not attempt to show how they might be remodelled. Boissier attributes to Cassiodorus a desire to effect this change, but Cassiodorus (in the *de inst. div. litt.*) was thinking not of schoolboys but of monks, and what he desired to create was a theological college, like those of Alexandria and Nisibis. The Church appears to have been content that grammar and rhetoric schools should be entirely secular down to the fall of the Empire.

that many of the most eminent Christian writers—Cyprian, Basil, Augustine[1] are instances—began life as teachers of rhetoric. It would be amazing if their style were not deeply coloured by reminiscences of the school.

But style is merely the form of the thought. Did the rhetorical influence pierce any deeper, and affect the substance also? I am afraid it must be allowed that it did. One very striking feature in Origen is his dread of the homeliness of Scripture. He tried hard to shake off the faults of the school, but still could never master the feeling that it was unworthy of a sacred book to speak of cakes of bread, or wells of water, or to tell such a story as that of Ruth[2].

[1] Tertullian also, a most influential writer, who reflected and strengthened, and to some extent created, the peculiar spirit of Latin theology, was steeped in rhetoric, though we do not know that he ever gave lessons in the art.

[2] Origen, *de Princ.* iv; Aug. *Conf.* iii. 5, v. 14, vi. 4 sq. The allegorism of Origen is a complicated subject, which should be treated with great tenderness and discrimination. (1) It applied to Scripture the golden rule that 'the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life,' and in this respect was highly admirable. (2) Its other cardinal axiom was that Scripture can contain nothing unworthy of God. Among things unworthy Origen reckoned (*a*) triviality; (*b*) scientific error; (*c*) immorality. As to (*a*) he was undoubtedly misled by the vicious rhetorical taste of his age. The other two points were strongly pressed by Gnostics and by the philosophers, and Origen was far too candid and courageous to shirk them. He did not deny that there were statements in the Old Testament which no educated man could accept, but, having no sense of historical development, he was driven to maintain that, though false in the letter, they were

Vitiated taste was the root from which sprang the flower of allegorism. Another result of rhetoric is to be found in the neglect of History. The Roman professor could not read Livy without seeing that there had been changes; but he never rose to the conception of orderly development, of a causal link between past and present. Change was merely a shifting to and fro, and the order of the past might at any time recur, when fortune's wheel had completed its revolution. It was this defect which rendered the Church unable to find an effectual answer to the Gnostic and pagan attack upon the morality of the Old Testament; and this weakness was another cause of allegorism. But further, it was this same inability to grasp the idea of progress which led to the wholesale importation of ideas and practices from the Old Testament into the Christian Church[1]. And may

true as conveying 'mysteries,' that is to say, in general, as wrapping up Christian dogmas. It is precisely here that he has not been treated with the tenderness that he deserves. The later Church dropped almost entirely his two great canons, and was too uneducated to feel his intellectual difficulties, but caught eagerly at the erroneous method by which he extracted Christian teaching from the least significant phrases of the Hebrew Scriptures.

[1] At two points in particular this contamination occurred. (1) In regard to the hierarchy. Even at the end of the first century the Christian presbyter is compared by Clement of Rome to the Jewish ἱερεύς. The idea struck deep root in the course of the third century. (2) In the adoption of the belief that certain sins were mortal. Hence arose Montanism, Novatianism, and Donatianism. The best teachers always insisted that no transgression was beyond the reach

it not be added that a sound historical training would have helped to stem the extraordinary tide of credulity and superstition which marks the fourth century?

Consider again that, the Bible not being taught in the ancient schools, the mass of the laity knew no more of Scripture than what they gathered from the lessons, the sermon, and the catechising. Probably even the ordinary priest was not much better instructed. Hence the authority of the clergy must have been greatly increased, while at the same time they were less fitted to wield it.

Lastly we may observe that the schools imparted nothing but the merest smattering of philosophy, and the results of this superficial veneer are clearly to be discerned in the age of the Four Great Councils. What the fathers then defined was undoubtedly the faith of the Church. The thing was the Christian belief, but the voice was that of the schools. Men found themselves driven to use words borrowed from Plato and the Stoics, *Essence*, *Hypostasis*, *Substance* and others, which they themselves did not thoroughly understand; and hence arose naturally the most disastrous strife and confusion. The Greek Church, which was the better educated, was amply justified in its dislike of all philosophic terms[1].

of God's mercy, or outside of the Church's commission to forgive. But the belief in death-sins was the cause of persecution, which began at once with the ascendancy of the Church.

[1] 'The fact is that the Christian conception of religion was radically

But, upon the whole, what we ought to notice is the energy of the Church's reaction against rhetoric and the rhetorical frame of mind, against garrulous sciolism, decadent taste, grandiosity, lax sentimentalism, and all the moral evils which attend these vices of the school. I have noticed briefly how the humility and simplicity of Christianity led eventually to the formation of new canons of taste, and prepared the way for the great popular literatures of modern times.

Much more might be said upon this point, if time allowed. Let me offer just a few remarks which may be found suggestive.

different from that out of which the philosophical notion of οὐσία emerged; and when this came into contact with Christianity a considerable disturbance was likely' (article by the Dean of Christ Church in *Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. iii. p. 30). • The meaning of the word *Essence*, again, differed in every school, and, according to most Platonists, God had no *Essence*, because He is above it. Again, the Latins avoided the word *Essence* and used in its place *Hypostasis* (or its Latin equivalent *Substantia*), but *Hypostasis* was the word selected by the Greeks to denote the Persons. Hence, while one-half of the Empire spoke of Three Hypostases, the other half spoke of One only. The words were in fact little more than counters, used to express whatever ideas theologians stamped upon them; the ideas were Christian, the words were heathen. Yet it should be observed that the Latin usage was in a sense scriptural. Tertullian took the word *Persona* from his old Latin Bible, from Prov. viii. 30 'cottidie oblectabar in persona ipsius,' and Lam. iv. 20 'spiritus personae eius Christus dominus' (see *adv. Prax.* 6, 14; Harnack, *Dogmeng.* ii. 288, ed. 1887). *Substantia* he probably found in Heb. i. 3, but the author of this Epistle was not without a tincture of philosophy.

Quintilian ascribes to rhetoric three main functions, which he calls the Laudatory, the Deliberative, and the Judicial. To the Laudatory belong those fulsome panegyrics of which we have so many examples. They were highly paid; the ablest men spent their best efforts on their elaboration; and they are monuments of depraved taste and inveracity. The Deliberative taught men to speak in the Senate or the Consistory; the Judicial shaped the pleadings of the barrister in courts of justice.

Now for the Christian the Laudatory found its proper field in worship. Some Christians wrote panegyrics under the Christian Emperors, and their effusions are quite as deplorable as those of the pagan orators. But every member of the Church was taught that glory, honour, and adoration belong of right to Almighty God, and the lesson was most powerfully driven home by the stately liturgies and the impressive ritual which enhanced their effect. If the worship of the Constantinian Church was too magnificent, as Jerome thought[1], at any rate the pomp and splendour had a worthy motive; what men were called upon to adore was a grandeur not of earth but of heaven.

Deliberative eloquence found its nearest counterpart in the sermon or homily. The name implies a conversational style, and the earliest sermons, as we know from the so-called Second Clement and Origen, were

[1] *Epp.* 52. 130.

grave, didactic, and quiet. It was looked upon as a high misdemeanour in Paul of Samosata that he practised the tricks of the rhetorician in the pulpit, and not before the fourth century do we find preachers who deliberately aimed at oratorical effect.

For the Judicial style we must go to the Church court, as it is described in the *Didascalia* [1]. There, every Monday, the bishop sat to hear and decide all disputes and recriminations amongst the brethren. Speech in such a gathering would be brief, unadorned and to the point, and its object would be not victory but justice.

The mind dwells with pleasure on this contrast between the false eloquence and the true. But after all it must be confessed that the old heathen taint was never thoroughly purged, till the deluge of the Barbarian invasion washed away all but the bare foundations of Roman art. Some of the results even survived the waters of that cataclysm.

[1] In chap. xi. See Mrs. Gibson's English translation, pp. 59 sqq.; or the German translation of Achelis and Flemming, pp. 59 sqq.

II

RELIGION UNDER THE EMPIRE

Under the Empire Education, we may say, is the One, Religion is the Many. In the first we find a uniform system, which extends unchanged from farthest East to farthest West. In the second we find a sea of confusion. There are gods of Rome, of Greece, of Syria, of Persia, of Egypt, of the Carthaginians and Africans, of Celts, of Teutons, and many other barbarous races; and all these various deities cross and intermingle. Further, we have the religion of the philosopher, and the religion of plain men and women. The very idea of religion differs from our own. Generally speaking these heathen cults had no Bible, no prayer-book, except a few special prayers and hymns, no creed, no catechism, no church-going, no sermon, no discipline. Even the priest in our sense of the word hardly existed. If we except the Druids in the West, the servants of Isis and Cybele in the East, the priest was merely one who offered the prescribed sacrifices, and presided at certain festivals. He was not pastor, or instructor, or example. It was not at all necessary that he should be a religious man or take his functions at

all seriously. The same man became a priest, just as he became a police-magistrate, as a natural step in his official promotion. One of the rocks on which Julian the Apostate went to wreck was that he tried to turn the heathen priest into the likeness of a Christian clergyman, and make him, among other new duties, train the temple choir [1]. The priests greatly resented this interference with their liberties.

The divinities of old Greece were divided into two classes, the Olympian and the Chthonian, the heavenly and the earthly, the gods and the demons, the good gods and the hard. They represent possibly the two governing ideas of nature worship, nature in her good humour and nature in her wrath, summer and winter, sunshine and storm, health and disease, calm and earthquake. There has been much speculation as to the origin of the religious idea, but this dualism is what we actually find in historical Greece [2]. From

[1] *Ep.* 56.

[2] No one theory will account for the extraordinary variety of beliefs and practices which are found in the old heathen cults. Those who are old enough to remember the beginnings of comparative philology in England will remember also how fascinating was the solar myth as set forth by Professor Max Müller. Since that time anthropology, folklore, and the study of the monuments, especially those of Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria, have familiarized us with a number of other hypotheses. It seems clear that the notions of God, of immortality, of duty had many sources or were strengthened by influences from many different quarters. The great question is whether these influences can be arranged in chronological and causal

the Olympian deities comes all that is good—wisdom, happiness, prosperity, unity, beauty, song. From the hard gods all that is evil—sickness of body and mind, crime, remorse, punishment, lamentation, mourning, and woe. One of the chief of the religious emotions, it will be observed, repentance, belonged exclusively to the sphere of the demons. Zeus and Apollo knew nothing about the broken and contrite heart. Zeus was honoured when all went well; but in times of trouble or disaster the Greek turned not to the god, but to the devil.

Greek nature worship lent itself easily to art and philosophy; it is intellectual but only feebly moral. Latin theology, though it must have sprung from the same roots in the forgotten past, is, as we know it, entirely different both in character and in tendency. The gods represent not the forces of nature, but the

order, or whether from the very first what we should call higher beliefs coexisted with those which we should call lower. In the latter case religious development must appear as a process not so much of growth as of purification. For instance, M. Fustel de Coulanges, in *La Cité antique*, connects Vesta, the Manes, and the Lares with ancestor worship, and traces this back to ages preceding the division between Greeks and Romans. But the names of Jupiter and Zeus go back equally far into prehistoric antiquity. They are connected with the word 'day'; both involve the idea that heaven is God or a symbol of God, while Jupiter adds further the belief that God is Father. Max Müller is still regarded as right upon this point. Fustel de Coulanges makes too much of ancestor worship, and there is much doubt as to what ancestor worship really meant. See note 2 on p. 99, below.

laws and institutions of social life. The family in heaven was a counterpart of the family on earth, as it might be seen in the palace of any of the Roman nobility. Jupiter and Juno were the lord and lady; and beneath them was an army of officers, attendants, ministers of every rank and degree. Some managed the service of the house; Vesta kept the hearth, the Penates watched over the store-closet, Janus guarded the door, under him again were three deputy porters, of whom Cardua attended to the hinges, Forculus to the leaves, Limentinus to the threshold. Others worked the farm. Saturn governed the sowing, Pales the cattle, Stercutius the foldyard, Epona the stable. Every place, every thing, had some one to look after it; and, as in a large household there are all kinds of characters, so some of the heavenly ministers were tricksy, or spiteful, or malignant. There were gods of fever and of mephitis, and there were plenty of wicked runaway slaves, vampires and hobgoblins.

The old Roman faith was remarkably simple. There was hardly any mythology, and for a long time the gods had no statues. It was also strongly moral. The gods gave every man his duty, and expected him to perform it. Filial obedience, chastity, respect for women, decency and gravity, good faith in public and in private, respect for law, sobriety, diligence, patriotism, all these were good old Roman virtues,

commanded by the gods and enforced by the Censors. Among the ancient Gentile cults there is none so respectable, and none so prosaic, as the Roman. It is the religion of men who are too busy to have any time for sentiment.

When Rome became the mistress of the world there was no doubt a change. The gods of Greece found their way into the city along with Greek culture and Greek vices. But the mythology never made itself at home in the West. To a certain extent Latin poets drew material for their verses from these vile legends, and any one who chose to corrupt himself with them could do so. But Virgil and Horace used them with great reserve, educated men never treated them seriously, soldiers looked for victory to the gods of the standards [1], and rustics still committed the fruit of their labours to Pales and the homely deities of the fields. Most people seem hardly to have looked beyond the household fetishes, the little Lares and Penates. The old Roman religion still lived on and

[1] The pet deities of the Roman soldier appear to have been generally of a harmless beneficent type, the natural protectors of peasants who, though inured to camps, have not forgotten the fields where they were bred. In the West the legionaries were much attached to the *Matres*, or *Suleviae*, who are represented on the monuments as three seated female figures, and were apparently regarded as givers of the harvest. They were cottage divinities, quite unknown to the upper classes, perhaps Celtic. See the article by Mr. F. Haverfield in *Archaeologia Aeliana*, vol. xv, new series, p. 324.

found its natural consummation in Caesar worship[1]. The Emperor while he lived had been the ruler and saviour of the world; what more natural than that he should continue after death to watch over the destinies of his people?

But the consolidation of the Empire had deeper consequences than this. Great political revolutions always strike deep, and this was the greatest that ever happened. The whole world woke up to find itself one family. The ruler was a despot, it is true; still, he was only one despot instead of many, and henceforth the meanest subject of the Empire might, and often did, climb through the school, the army, the bar, the senate, to high position in the state, even to the throne itself. New hopes dawned for the provincial,

[1] The ancient state in Greece and Rome, as truly as in Palestine, was theocratic; the oldest institutions and laws flowed not from reason or expedience, to which indeed they were often strongly opposed, but from the religious belief (Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité antique*). Caesar worship was an attempt to perpetuate the theocracy, under the changed conditions of society. 'Praesens divus habebitur Augustus,' says Horace, *Carm.* iii. 5. 2. The idea was heathen because Caesar was regarded as an object of worship, at any rate after his death. The Christian Emperors made a very similar claim, though this specially heathen feature was dropped. See the military oath in Vegetius, ii. 5: The soldier swore 'per Deum et Christum et Sanctum Spiritum et per maiestatem imperatoris'; because he owed obedience to Augustus 'tamquam praesenti et corporali deo.' Constantine and his successors claimed to be the vicegerents of God, in the same sense as King David or King Solomon. In the Eastern Church the claim is still recognized (see the note at the end of the last Lecture).

and even for the slave. The full significance of the change began to reveal itself distinctly with the accession of Vespasian, who owed his elevation to the provinces, and to the eastern provinces.

All over the Empire expectation was aroused, and views were broadened. There was a new sense of human dignity, a higher estimation, we may say, of the human soul, with which, according to the profound observation of Pascal, is always united a keener sense of its misery. It is in this way that we must account for that quickening of the religious instinct which begins in the first century, and becomes very manifest in the second. We can discern it in many quarters, in the marriage legislation of Augustus, in the *Carmen Seculare* of Horace, in Virgil's lines on the battle of Actium, in the epitaphs, in those clubs or guilds which flourished in great numbers and all had a religious character, in the vogue of the Stoic philosophy, in attempts to ameliorate the condition of the slave, in the foundation of orphanages[1]. A new idea of sanctity emerges in Apollonius of Tyana, the Pythagorean ascetic and worker of miracles; in the Boeotian shepherd, Agathion, who spent his life in destroying wild beasts and would touch no food that had been prepared by a woman; in the old Greek priestess described by Dion Chrysostom. The majesty

[1] Orphanages in a loose sense; they are generally called the 'alimentary institutions.' See Lecture IV.

of Purity has revealed itself in that lawless heathen world, like Milton's lady amid the rout of Comus. Behind her comes Repentance, and a strange new craving for atonement and expiation. We have seen what was made of these emotions by the old religions. The Greek attributed them to the Demons, the Latin ignored them altogether. The new men required a new God who could explain them and guide them to some profitable end, a God of the conscience, beneficent at once and dreadful. Hence the popularity of the Oriental mysteries, of the Egyptian Isis and of the Persian Mithra [1].

Isis worship had gained a footing in Rome in the days of Sulla, but for a long time it was regarded with great disfavour. It sprang out of that Egyptian beast worship which seemed so hateful to Virgil, and, like many other forms of emotional religion, it lent itself very easily to moral depravity. On one occasion the Emperor Tiberius, provoked by a vile intrigue which had been planned and perpetrated in the very shrine, pulled down the temple of Isis, crucified her priests, and threw her statue into the Tiber. But the Flavians,

[1] Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité antique*, p. 328, 'Les cultes orientaux, qui, à partir du sixième siècle, envahirent la Grèce et l'Italie, furent accueillis avec empressement par la plèbe; c'étaient des cultes qui, comme le bouddhisme, ne faisaient acception ni de castes ni de peuples. . . . Ce furent là les dieux de la démocratie.' The remark is just and instructive, but it was the Empire that made these Oriental ideas powerfully operative.

whose cause had been greatly helped by her devotees, treated her with especial favour. Juvenal testifies to her fascination for the ladies of Rome, and, by the end of the second century, Isis had found a home in every part of the Empire. Even in Britain, from the Roman Wall to the Land's End, her name was adored; a ring bearing the figure of her companion, the dog-headed Anubis, has been found in a grave in the Isle of Man. Like wildfire, far more rapidly than Christianity, this ambiguous cult overran the world. We shall see the reason, if we consider the best-known instance of conversion, that of Apuleius, towards the end of the second century.

Apuleius[1] describes for us, first of all, the mode in which the goddess appealed to the people. On stated days there was a great procession through the streets of the town. The column was headed by a band of dancing masqueraders, like the old rout of the Lord of Misrule, or such as you might see at a modern carnival. Then came the catechumens, the new recruits of the *Sospitatrix Dea*, dressed in their best and crowned with flowers. Then came a company

[1] See for Isis worship Apuleius, *Metam.* xi; Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*; an elaborate article on the goddess will be found in Roscher. I have not yet seen the new translation of the *Book of the Dead*; there is a review of it by Mr. G. St. Clair in the *Journal of Theological Studies* for Oct., 1904. The Hibbert Lectures for 1879, on *The Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religion of Ancient Egypt*, by P. le Page Renouf, will be found very useful.

of men and women bearing flaring torches of wax; then the choir, singing hymns to the sound of the flute; then the initiated, or, as Apuleius calls them, 'the religious,' tonsured men and veiled women, of all ranks and ages, clothed in pure white linen, and bearing in their hands the mystic *sistrum*, a kind of rattle fashioned in silver or gold. Finally the rear was closed by the clergy, also draped in white linen, carrying the sacred emblems. It is such a picture as Lord Leighton delighted to portray. The pomp swept into the temple, where the *grammateus*, chief of the *pastophori* or priests, the Isiac bishop, mounted the pulpit, and recited from a book a long bidding prayer in Greek, which was the sacred language of Isis worship as it was for two centuries that of the Church of Rome, for the Emperor, the senate, the knights, the people of Rome, for all travellers by land or by sea, and for all the provinces. When he finished the congregation responded with a loud cry, a sort of Amen, knelt down one by one to kiss the feet of the goddess, and so dispersed.

Here we discern an organized body of worshippers, an organized body of clergy, a prayer-book, a liturgy, a tonsure, a surplice, the use of a sacred language, an elaborate and impressive ceremonial in many respects very similar to that of the mediaeval church. Even the phraseology exhibits curious analogies. Apuleius speaks of 'the religious,' the worshippers of Isis are

her 'soldiers[1],' her service is a *militia*, the outside world will be that of the 'civilians' or *pagani*; again, there is a *sacramentum*[2], and the initiated are said to be 'regenerate.' There are other singular facts. Isis is figured as a woman bearing the divine child Horus upon her knees, and claims the titles of Queen of Heaven, Queen of the Sea. Did Isis borrow from the Church or the Church from Isis? Or are some at least of these resemblances accidental? The same question will recur when we come to examine the worship of Mithra. For the present we may put it

[1] The term 'brethren' was also used; see Deissmann, *Bibelstudien*, pp. 82, 209.

[2] *Sacramentum* means especially, 'the soldier's oath of allegiance,' and its use in Latin theology as in Isis worship follows immediately from the conception of the believer as a soldier (see Cumont, i. 318). *Paganus* means 'a civilian,' as opposed to 'a soldier' (Pliny, *Epp.* x. 18 'et milites et pagani': cp. Juv. xvi. 33; Tac. *Hist.* i. 53; iii. 24, 43, 77; Tert. *de Cor.* 11), and is used in a general sense like our 'layman' (Pliny, *Epp.* vii. 25 'Sunt enim, ut in castris, sic etiam in literis nostris, plures cultu pagano'). In this sense the word is found, perhaps for the first time, in Persius, *prol.* 6 'ipse semipaganus ad sacra vatum carmen affero nostrum.' The first instance of the use of 'pagan,' as opposed to 'Christian,' is to be found possibly in an inscription of the second century given by Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, p. 15 'quod inter fedeles fidelis fuit, inter alienos pagana fuit,' which, from the use of the word *fidelis*, is most probably Christian, not Isiac or Mithraic. For the old explanation (which is still widely held) that 'pagan' means 'villager,' see Godefroi's note in *Cod. Theod.* vol. vi. pp. 274 sqq.; it is rejected by Harnack, *Die Mission*, pp. 297 sqq., and by Zahn, *Neue kirch. Zeitschrift*, 1899, pp. 28 sqq.

upon one side, only observing that Apuleius was writing somewhat late in the second century.

The chief moment in the worship of Isis was the rite of initiation, which Apuleius describes in language of guarded obscurity. There was a baptism, a ten days' fast, and a course of instruction given by a priest. There were persons who acted as godfathers to the neophyte. Finally, there was a service of reception at the temple in the evening. Crowds assembled to welcome the new brother; every one brought him a gift. Then, clad in a coarse linen garment, and attended only by his sponsors, he was led by the priest into the dark *penetralia* of the shrine. 'What I saw there,' says Apuleius, 'I would tell if it were lawful. . . . I trode the confines of death, and the threshold of Proserpine; I was swept round all the elements, and returned; I beheld the sun at midnight shining with purest radiance. Gods of heaven and gods of hell I saw face to face and adored in presence.' In that dark cell, illuminated by flashlights and filled with surging stupefying vapours, dizzy as he was with protracted fasting, and excited by wild anticipations, he saw Osiris ruling among the dead, and heard the magic formula by which the awful judge is appeased. The ancients were past masters in the scenic art, and could have taught our modern thaumaturgists a good deal that has happily been forgotten.

Now what did it all mean? What was the secret,

the inner significance, of this new and popular devotion? We can answer this question with tolerable clearness and certainty. Isis adapted herself to every degree of intelligence. Most of her devotees would know little beyond the wild legend, which told how the god Osiris was cruelly slain by his wicked brother Typhon; how Isis, his faithful wife, wandered over the marshes of the Delta in her papyrus boat, gathering up the fragments of his corpse; how Horus would have avenged his father Osiris and slain his murderer, but that Isis intervened, cut Typhon's bonds and let him go free; how Osiris became lord of the world beyond the grave, and is strong to deliver the souls of them that believe from the evil spirits that lie in wait to devour them[1]. It is a legend, and it is wild;

[1] 'The deceased passes through the chine of Apepi the Serpent, at the risk of being devoured; he meets with crocodiles, and through them, strangely, may be robbed of his Words of Power. There are Merta goddesses, and the Apshait, and the Eater of the Ass, all requiring to be kept back. At a place called Sutenhenen a great slaughter is perpetrated, and at another place there is a divine block of execution. The unwary soul may be imprisoned, or be taken in the net of the catchers of fish' (Mr. St. Clair in *J. T. S.* for Oct. 1904, p. 57). The Ass, I suppose, is that upon which Typhon fled (see Plutarch, *de Is. et Os.* 31). Apuleius tells us that initiation was very costly, but it may well have been thought worth the money. In an inscription, *CIL.* vi. 3. 20616, we read, 'May Osiris give thee the cold water.' For the explanation of this prayer see Le Page Renouf, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 141. 'The most usual representation of this is the picture in which the goddess Nut pours out the water of life to the deceased from the interior of a sycamore tree. In

yet what elements of beauty does it enclose! Here we have a divine humanity, a God who suffers a cruel death out of love for man, and a divinely human wife and mother, Isis the compassionate and merciful, who loves her husband with a love that is stronger than death, yet sets his murderer free, bidding him go and sin no more. Many a stricken spirit found comfort in the adoration of Isis. 'She does not forget,' says Plutarch, 'the sorrows which she endured, nor her painful wanderings, but ordains most holy rites in remembrance of her sufferings, for instruction in piety, and for the comfort of men and women oppressed by similar misfortunes[1].' Such were the lessons inculcated by her priests, and enforced by washings, fastings, penances, pilgrimages. May we not say that Isis worship was a sort of savage counterpart of Christianity, deeply tainted, alas, by magic, better able to rouse the feelings than to chasten them, yet, in its wild Egyptian way, a gospel of suffering, a shadow of better things to come?

For the educated there was an inner doctrine. Above the bestial gods of the Nile the hierophants had constructed a system of Pantheism, just as the

a picture, published by M. Chabas, the deceased kneels before Osiris, and receives from him the water of life from a vessel under which is written *ānch ba*, "that the soul may live." The picture is taken from the mummy of a priest who lived twelve hundred years before Christ.'

[1] Plutarch, *de Is. et Os.* 27.

Brahmins have evolved the Vedânta out of the repulsive pantheon of Hinduism. The dog, the hawk, the bull, the crocodile, are but symbols of that great world-spirit from which all living things emerge, and into which they sink, like waves rising and falling on the ocean of eternity. On the statue of Isis at Sais is said to have been an inscription running thus, 'I am all that is, or has been, or shall be, and no mortal hath ever lifted my veil[1].' This is not monotheism—there was no monotheism in the Roman world—it is Pantheism. Thus the two extremes of religious belief, the personal and the impersonal conception of God, joined hands amicably before the shrine of Isis.

She was too good-natured, this kindly goddess, and dispensed her favours too liberally. Apuleius was a disreputable creature before his initiation, and quite as disreputable afterwards. The worship of Mithra[2] was a far more serious thing. From monuments and inscriptions, which are extremely plentiful, we know enough to be certain on this point. But, though we possess its temples, its altars, its altar-pictures, though we have considerable and minute information as to its rites and organization, even

[1] Plutarch, *de Is. et Os.* 9.

[2] See Cumont, *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*, Bruxelles, 1896. It is needless to give any other reference. Everything that is at present known will be found amassed, digested, and ready for use in these two magnificent volumes.

M. Cumont cannot tell us exactly what it taught. It came into the West a little later than Isis worship, struck root towards the end of the Flavian period, and by the middle of the third century had attained such dimensions that it seemed not unlikely to become the religion of the whole world. Fortunately it was otherwise ordered. But to this strange Persian religion we owe the name of Sunday and of the other days of the week, and probably the date of Christmas Day[1].

Mithra was a Persian deity, but in the original scheme of Mazdeism he plays only a subordinate part.

[1] 'Sunday' is used by Justin, *Apol.* i. 67, but 'Saturday' is found in Tibullus, i. 3. 18 'Saturni aut sacram me tenuisse diem.' *CIL.* vi. 1. 13602 'dies lunae, Saturni'; 13782 'dies Mercurii'; vi. 4. 30112 'in die Saturno.' It was a very common practice to cast the horoscope of a new-born child, and the planetary day-names were probably brought into vogue in Rome by the Chaldaean astrologers, who were in close alliance with Mithraism (see Cumont, i. 299). Mithraism was very strong among the legions on the German frontier and in Britain, and it was probably by this road that the day-names found entrance among the Teutons and Celts (see also the article on *Week* in the *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*). December 25 was the *Natalis Invicti*, and, when Christmas was instituted in the fourth century and in the West, it has been thought that this day was selected as that of the Nativity in order to drive out Mithra from one of his strongholds (see Cumont, i. 342). Duchesne (*Origines du culte chrétien*, ed. 2, p. 250) thinks that, March 25 having been adopted as the date of the Conception, the Birth was placed by natural inference on December 25. But he does not absolutely reject the view of M. Cumont. Indeed no affirmation is possible, as there is nothing but hypothesis to build upon.

From Iran he had travelled to Babylon, thence northwards to the eastern borders of Asia Minor, where he came into touch with Greek ideas. The well-known figures of the god are partly Greek and partly Oriental. Mithra is always represented as a young man, wearing what was supposed to be the dress of a Persian; and the sculptured slabs, which formed what we may call the reredos in all his temples, are thought to have been copied about two centuries before Christ from a group much in fashion with Hellenic statuaries, representing Victory slaying a Bull. Thus Persia, Chaldaea, Greece—the three nations whose hand is to be traced in the post-exilic literature of Israel—all helped to shape Mithraism. It is a much nobler pedigree than that of Isis.

One highly remarkable feature in this new cult is that its missionaries appear to have been mainly soldiers. Men of war are always strongly susceptible to religious influence; and the standing army of Rome was no exception to the rule. Auxiliary cohorts from Commagene and Cappadocia, who had been nurtured in the faith of Mithra, legionaries who had served a term of years in the East and then returned to their quarters on the Rhine or the Danube carrying the new god with them, were the chief agents of the propaganda. By this means Mithraism was disseminated with surprising rapidity all along the northern frontier of the Empire as far as the Roman Wall in

Britain, and all along the southern frontier on the borders of the African desert. Syrian merchants also, who carried on a considerable trade in Italy and Southern Gaul, played a large part, and slaves who were kidnapped or captured in large numbers in the East, and then sold all over the West, a still larger. M. Cumont in his elaborate volumes gives an instructive map, showing the geographical distribution of Mithraism. Wherever the legions were quartered or trade was active, there the temples of the Persian deity occur in great numbers. But it is noticeable that in the East this Eastern god found little favour. In Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, the caves of Mithra, though not unknown, are rare. These countries had mysteries of their own, better suited to the national temperament.

In primitive times Mithra appears to have been worshipped in natural grottoes among the rocks, and, wherever his religion spread, this ancient usage was kept in mind by the peculiar construction of his temples, which were subterranean, and were always called 'caves.' Above ground there would be a hall, serving as vestibule or ante-chapel; from this a flight of steps led down to the dark sanctuary below. The best instance of these 'caves' is that which lies under the church, or rather the two churches, of St. Clement in Rome. It is a rectangular vault about thirty feet long and nineteen feet wide. Along each of the side

walls runs a sloping bench of stone, on which the worshippers knelt, or rather crouched. In the shorter wall at the further end is a little apse, once filled in by a large bas-relief, which may have been made to revolve on a pivot in the semicircular recess, so as to exhibit first one of its faces and then the other. In front of this stood three altars, and on the sides of the chamber, above the benches, appear to have been other sculptures. The place is very small, and cannot have accommodated more than forty or fifty worshippers at a time. It is now full of water from the overflow of some underground spring. Running water was necessary for the ritual, and in or near every cave there was a fountain.

The original ornaments of the cave beneath St. Clement's have almost wholly disappeared, but we know pretty well what they must have been, an immense number of Mithraic monuments having been discovered elsewhere. Unfortunately it is not easy to interpret them as clearly as we could wish. The legend illustrated by these grotesque symbols is much older than the Zend Avesta, in which Mazdeism appears in the more modern shape imprinted upon it by the Zoroastrian reformation. But, with the help of M. Cumont and other scholars, we can form a tolerable idea of the Mithra Saga as it was taught in the Roman Empire.

In the old Iranian theology Mithra was by no

means the sovereign figure. The highest place belongs to Zervan or Eternity, beneath whom stand Ormuzd, the great Father of all that exists, and his opposite Ahriman, the spirit of evil. Between these two there is incessant war. Beneath these great beings, again, appear the four divine elements, earth, air, fire, and water, which no good Persian may pollute, and a host of minor deities, good and bad, allies of Ormuzd or of Ahriman in their eternal strife. Here we meet, again, the same ideas as in the Isis legend—the metaphysical, pantheistic thought of Eternity, the hostility between the champions of good and evil, legible traces of a primaeval nature worship. Some food is provided for every rank of intelligence, from the philosopher to the slave. Again, like Isis worship, and unlike Christianity, Mithraism is not an exclusive religion. Somewhere or another within this host of deities ample room can be found for all the gods of all the nations. Both Isis and Mithra added something to the indigenous cults but abolished nothing.

Mithra was originally but one among the lower gods of Persia; but his figure is of such force and vitality, and has been animated by such profoundly religious conceptions, that he pushes all the others into the background, and remains the one sufficient object of adoration. He is the mediator between god and man, creator, regenerator, the giver of all light, the

champion of justice, truth, and holiness, the comforter of man in all trouble, and his strong helper against the evil Ahriman, who by his grace can always be overcome. The title most commonly given to him is *Invictus*, 'the unconquerable.'

A favourite theme for the sculptor is his nativity. He is depicted as a child, wearing a Phrygian cap and rising out of a rock; in his right hand is a knife, in his left a torch. Shepherds peep forth from a hiding-place to see the wonder, or offer to the new-born god the first-fruits of their flocks.

A series of tableaux depicts his labours on behalf of man. The subject of the great altar-piece is always the slaying of the Bull. Mithra has cast the beast upon its knees and strides upon its back, dragging its head upwards with his left hand, while with the right he plunges his knife into its right shoulder. Generally, but not always, his face is turned away from the wound which he inflicts. On either side stand his two inseparable attendants, Cautes and Cautopates, each holding a torch; the one torch is erect, the other reversed; they are the symbols of life and death. The end of the bull's tail is formed by three ears of wheat, the dog is lapping up the blood, and noxious creatures, the snake and the scorpion, are endeavouring to suck the vital juices of the dying beast. The averted face has been thought to signify the horror and reluctance with which Mithra performs the

dreadful task imposed upon him from above, but the attitude is not universal, and the interpretation may be fanciful. The slaying of the Bull is emblematic of the profound idea of life through death. The Bull is the power of evil, which is twice slain, once at creation, when its blood gives birth to all animal and vegetable existence, once again at the end of the world, when from the same blood flows new life for the soul and for the body of man.

Other pictures show us Mithra feasting with the Sun, his comrade and ally, after the accomplishment of his labours on behalf of man. The two gods recline upon a couch; before them is a three-legged table, on which are four small round loaves marked with a cross.

In all these sculptures Mithra is represented as a beautiful youth clad in Persian attire. In none of his effigies is there anything monstrous or supernatural. Great importance must have been attached to this point; the object was no doubt to inculcate his perfect sympathy with the human race.

All this is very remarkable. In these strange monuments we can discern, though dimly, the existence of a lofty system of religious speculation, and of a not inconsiderable acquaintance with the spiritual needs of humanity. But, besides these reliefs, we possess also a large number of brief inscriptions which, taken in combination with such scanty notices as can be

gleaned from ancient writers, set before us a detailed picture of a highly organized Mithraic Church. We read of seven grades of initiation; the three lowest did not admit to the mysteries, and correspond roughly to the catechumenate; the four highest are those of the communicants. The highest class of all was that of the Fathers, one of whom acted as president of each of the inferior divisions. There was a body of priests headed by a chief-priest, and there were companies of ascetics and of virgins. There was an authoritative moral teaching, which is spoken of as 'the commandments.' Among the rites of initiation was a baptism in water, a brand[1], the use of honey and of anointing; and there was a sort of *Agape* in commemoration of the banquet of Mithra and the Sun, in which the worshippers partook of bread, water, and wine. The resurrection of the body was taught, and the faithful were not cremated but interred.

The churches were small, but linked together in federation by some recognized bond of union. They consisted at first almost entirely of the poor, but within the body the most perfect equality reigned; the members are known as the Brethren, and we meet with a slave who yet was a Father. The

[1] Some of the Carpocratian Gnostics marked themselves with a brand upon the back of the right ear (*Iren.* i. 25. 6); they may have borrowed this usage from Mithraism.

expenses of worship must have been considerable, but they were provided by poor men with lavish generosity; for one Mithra temple at Rome, a freeman and a libertine join resources to provide an altar of marble, and in the list of donations appears the contribution of a slave. It is impossible in part of a single lecture to give more than an outline of this remarkable sect, but a rich profusion of details and illustrations will be found in the stately quartos of M. Cumont.

Some portion of what I have said about Isis worship will be true also of Mithraism. The scenes enacted in these gloomy caverns were probably not unlike those witnessed by Apuleius in the inner shrine of the Egyptian goddess. In both cases alike the thaumaturgic art was no doubt freely employed to quicken the dull susceptibility of the devotee. Not one of the pagan mysteries was uncontaminated by magic, and Maximus, who initiated Julian into the rites of Mithra, was a charlatan of the most accomplished kind. But Mithra appears to have given, what Isis did not even attempt, a severe and regular moral discipline. Further, this discipline was to issue not in mere asceticism, though it inculcated abstinence and purity, but in an active warfare, under the banner of Mithra, against all the evil wrought by Ahriman in this world. This is a trait that deserves our warmest admiration.

We noticed in the case of Isis worship certain resemblances to Christianity, chiefly of a verbal kind. In Mithraism they are more numerous, and are more than verbal. We find a Feast of the Nativity, a Sunday, an Adoration of Shepherds, a Baptism, a Last Supper, an Ascension, an organization in many remarkable points strangely parallel to that of the Church. It is true that when we pick them out and isolate them, as in a brief account we are compelled to do, they appear more salient, more significant, than they really are. It is true also that some of them cannot be precisely dated. Cumont thinks that there was a growing tendency to assimilate Mithra to Jesus. Very probably he is right; for there can be little doubt that the later heathenism freely appropriated the ideas, the practices, the language of the Christian Church. Something is due to community of origin; the week of seven days named after the planets comes from Chaldaea, and lustral washings were common in the East. Good organization springs out of good common sense, and will always follow the same main lines. But here, again, we cannot withhold our praise from the Mithraists. They have not only the name of brotherhood, but the thing and the spirit. What Seneca prated about and Epictetus preached, they made a living reality.

We can see many good reasons for the great popularity of Mithraism. It was brotherly and it was

pure; it caused no scandals, hatched no conspiracies, and interfered with nobody. It provided the slave with a good lord in whose sight are neither bond nor free, the soldier with a good captain, the *Invictus Comes*. Philosophers saw in Mithra the ally of the Sun, which to the Platonist was the symbol of the sovereign idea of Good. There was an atonement for the sinner, spiritual comfort and temporal help for the afflicted, a virtuous and strenuous example for the lovers of righteousness. But all this was for men only. Women were shut out from the cave of Mithra, but a shelter was provided for them in the allied temples of the Great Mother, Cybele.

The effects of Mithraism were very great. It paved the way for Gnosticism, and it fostered, and partly blended with, the worship of the Sun, which from the time of Alexander Severus becomes, we may say, the official religion of the Empire [1]. The figure of the Sun-god is found on the earlier coins of Constantine, and what Julian the Apostate endeavoured to restore was the worship, not of the Capitoline Jove, but of the Sun. So greatly had heathenism changed since the days of Augustus.

St. Augustine once met a Mithraic priest who said to him *Et ipse Pileatus Christianus est*, 'The man

[1] Cumont, i. 287 sqq. See also Léon Homo, *Essai sur le règne de l'Empereur Aurélien*, pp. 190 sqq.

with the Phrygian cap is also a Christian[1].' Like other Fathers St. Augustine looked upon Mithraism as a base imitation of the Gospel, invented by the devil for the purpose of deluding the unwary. It was not an unnatural view for a Christian teacher in those days. But time has vanquished the Unconquered Comrade, and we, to whom his caves, his sacraments, his monuments are merely objects of antiquarian curiosity, can afford to take a more liberal view. The priest was partly right and partly wrong. Mithraism was so like Christianity that it no doubt helped to open the door for its advent; at the same time it was so unlike that there could be no peace between the two. It rested upon a fable. There never was a Mithra, and he never slew the Bull. Some of the Mithraic prayers were probably not unlike the bidding prayer of Isis; but in the darkened shrines of both divinities, when the god was implored to come near and show himself, a very different kind of petition was employed. We have what is thought to be a Mithra liturgy[2]. It is a mere vulgar incantation; strings of divine titles are freely punctuated with screams, inarticulate noises, and barbaric unmean-

[1] *In Ioh. evang. tract.* 7, p. 1140, Migne.

[2] *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, Dieterich, Leipzig, 1903. M. Cumont regards this curious document as magical rather than Mithraic, but the two epithets are by no means mutually exclusive. The prayers are of just the same character as the Gnostic prayer given in the next Lecture.

ing words, and the object is clearly to work up the mind of the devotee into a state of unreasoning frenzy, like that of the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel.

Mithraism had no doubt its dark side, though it was probably not so dark as it appeared to the early Christians, who accused the god of demanding human sacrifices [1]. But it had also a bright side, which marks it as the best and most elevating of all the forms of heathenism known to have existed in the Empire.

[1] Socrates, iii. 2. There was some ground for the suspicion. In the *Vita Commodi*, 9, we read, 'Sacra Mithriaca homicidio vero polluit, cum illic aliquid ad speciem timoris vel dici vel fingi soleat.' Among the rites of initiation there would appear to have been some juggling with a sword and a bowl of blood, 'un meurtre simulé,' says Cumont, i. 322, 'qui à l'origine avait sans doute été réel.' Human sacrifice may have endured in the more barbarous districts of Asia Minor, but in the West it was suppressed by law (ibid. p. 69). For this reason Moloch-worship was forbidden by Tiberius in Africa, and Druidism by Claudius in Gaul. Human bones have been found in the caves of Mithra, but this fact is not incapable of an innocent explanation.

III

RELIGION UNDER THE EMPIRE

Isis worship and Mithraism prepared the way for Gnosticism, which may, upon the whole, be regarded as a phase of heathenism.

Gnosticism is a term rather loosely employed to denote not a particular definite sect, but rather a type or genus, which embraces a bewildering variety of systems, some wholly pagan, some more or less Christian. It is impossible to describe them except in general terms. They all taught the existence of an evil Creator of the world, side by side with, or not far below, the good Creator of spirit and intelligence; and they all, except perhaps the Marcionites, dealt in occultism. Occultism was the knowledge, or Gnosis, from which they derived their title. They sprang up we do not exactly know when, but there are allusions to some kind of Gnosticism in the Epistle to the Colossians and in the Pastoral Epistles. They flourished from the second century onwards, gradually changing their old name for that of Manicheeism. They maintained their existence down to the time of the Albigensian War and St. Thomas Aquinas. During all these centuries

they never produced a great man, or won a place in the kingdom of letters. The reason must surely have been that they addressed themselves to the congenital infirmities of the human mind, but could not satisfy its higher powers.

Gnosticism is commonly said to be a form of Syncretism. This is a word of such importance for the history of religion under the Empire that we ought not to leave it unexplained. Syncretism means 'mixture,' and, in special, the mixture of two things that will not blend, as for instance of oil and water.

Let us take an example. Among the many illustrations in M. Cumont's elaborate volumes on Mithra is one representing a ring[1]. It is a flat hoop of gold, on which are engraved the names of Zeus and Mithra, a snake, a number of mystical signs, and the monogram of Christ. The wearer of this amulet worshipped the ancient Graeco-Roman gods, the new Persian god, the old serpent, with we know not what other fetishes, and in some sense the Lord Jesus. He pooled all religions, we may say, on the idea that, as the unknown god may always have power to hinder or to help, it is better to leave no one out of the list. In the same way, Redwald, King of East Anglia, set up an altar to Christ in the temple of Woden and Thor[2]. So, again, in the time of

[1] ii. 452 sq.

[2] Bede, ii. 15; see Mr. Plummer's note for other similar instances.

St. Boniface, Thuringians, who called themselves Christians, ate the stork and the wild horse[1]. Even in modern Hayti it is said that many of the negroes combine Roman Catholicism with Voodoo, practising in secret serpent worship, poisoning, magic, and human sacrifice.

All this is Syncretism. It is extremely common under the Empire. In the Book of Acts we read of an altar at Athens dedicated 'to an Unknown God,' and inscriptions of the same kind are to be found in the *Corpus*[2]. We have seen how the old Roman faith was mixed with the Greek, how Isis worship, which in the eyes of Virgil was an abomination, was yet finally taken up with great fervour. Judaism also exercised considerable influence. Fuscus Aristius, the friend of Horace, professes to observe the Sabbath and respect the prejudices of the circumcised. Pythagoreanism again had a popular representative in Apollonius of Tyana, who combined Greek idealism with Buddhist asceticism and magic. A little later Plutarch adopts from Plato, from Egypt, and from Persia the doctrine of an Evil Soul in nature. At the same time there was a growing interest in Christianity. The church doors stood open, and

[1] Boniface, *Epp.* 87 (in *Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini aevi*, Berlin, 1892).

[2] *CIL.* vi. 4. 30694, 'Sei deo sei deivae sacr. C. Sextus C. F. Calvinus pr. de Senati sententia restituit.'

numbers of people attended at certain portions of the worship without any definite purpose of becoming communicants. They would learn about as much of the Gospel as Fuscus Aristius knew of Judaism. In this state of things we find the adequate explanation of Gnostic Syncretism.

It will not be possible to give you a detailed account of these curious sects, but I may venture to sketch a few of their leading and authentic traits.

Many of the Gnostics accepted the whole of the Christian creed, and were diligent students of the New Testament. But the simple doctrine of the Church was quite inadequate to feed their insatiable curiosity about the unseen world. The Gnostic dwelt habitually in a realm of angels and demons, and the most powerful of the evil spirits were the gods of Greece, who rule this lower earth. Thus in the Valentinian book called the *Pistis Sophia*[1] we read, 'God bound eighteen hundred rulers in every aeon (there were twelve aeons), and set three hundred and sixty over them, and further set five other great rulers to rule over the three hundred and sixty and all the other rulers that are bound. The five they call in the world of human kind by these names: the first is

[1] P. 361 of Mead's English translation. One of these demons rejoices in what is perhaps the longest name in existence, Ipsantachounchainchoucheoch.

called Kronos; the second Ares; the third Hermes; the fourth Aphrodite; the fifth Zeus.'

They were 'bound' by divine decrees allotting to each his province, but this binding did not deprive them of power. On the contrary, it is said of them that 'they steer the world and the aeons of the sphere.'

Let me give you from the same book a passage describing the Valentinian Eucharist[1]. 'And Jesus said, Bring me some fire and vine-branches. They brought them unto him. He set out the offering, placing two vessels of wine, the one on the right, the other on the left thereof. The offering was set in front of the vessels. He placed a cup of water in front of the vessel of wine on the right, and a cup of water in front of the vessel of wine on the left. Between the cups he set pieces of bread, according to the number of the disciples. The cups were behind the bread. Jesus stood before the offering, and grouped his disciples behind him, all clad in linen garments, holding in their hands the number of the names of the father of the treasure of light. He cried aloud, saying, Hear me, O Father, Father of all Fatherhood, Boundless Light. *Iao*, *Iouo*, *Iao*, *Aoi*, *Oia*, *Psinother*, *Theropsin*, *Opsither*,' and so on through a string of forty-five similar ejaculations. It will be observed that some of them are shrieking utterances of the

[1] Ibid. p. 377.

vocalic sounds, others are permutations of the same combination of syllables, others again may be forgotten names or titles of Oriental deities, punctuated by repetitions of the word Amen. We find exactly the same thing in that supposed Mithra Liturgy to which I made allusion in the preceding Lecture, and in magical documents, for instance in the Ephesian Letters. These unmeaning and reiterated yells were intended, no doubt, to work up the devotee into a state of frenzy, but they were also supposed to form a sacred language, understood of God though not of man, and powerful to call down divine help which might otherwise be refused. We find them in the old Baal worship, and in some of the Gnostic *Acts*, and they probably formed a leading feature in all the newer types of paganism.

Another striking feature of the Gnostic sects is the great influence which they allowed to women. Many of their leaders had an Egeria, and some were attended by troops of ecstatic female devotees. They attributed exaggerated honour to the Virgin Mary; 'the pleroma of all pleromas' she is called in the *Pistis Sophia*[1]. In this direction there is only too

[1] P. 28 (Mead's transl.); cp. also pp. 115 sqq. Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, also act as interpreters of deep mysteries, pp. 52 sqq. Peter complains, p. 57, 'Master, we cannot endure this woman thus to take our place from us, and not suffer us to speak, but she speaks many times.' Jesus soothes the angry apostle, but still encourages and praises the woman.

much reason for suspecting that the Gnostics were largely instrumental in corrupting the doctrine of the Church. The same emotional temperament led them often into grave moral disorders.

It must not be supposed that there was nothing more serious than this in Gnosticism. Beneath their monstrous systems lay a solid logical basis, and there are documents, such as the Letter of Ptolemy to Flora, the Fragments of Basilides and Valentinus, and the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, which show us what it was. The Gnostic was beset by just those difficulties which beset ourselves, and which we are accustomed to regard as our own peculiar burden, the waste, confusion, and apparent cruelty of nature, the great inequality in the intellectual and physical endowments of mankind, the problem of the will, the theory of punishment and of the divine justice, and the rudimentary morality of the Hebrew Scriptures. All these are serious problems, which are as oppressive now as they were in the second century. The mistake of the Gnostic was twofold. They are scientific problems, and he approached them, not in the spirit of Greek science, but in groundless confidence upon the inner light. Again, what the Christian called a doubt the Gnostic took for a certainty, and thus what the Christian regarded as a certainty became to the Gnostic necessarily a most formidable doubt. He maintained that the world was the work of an

evil creator, and all things beautiful and good rose up instantly in protest. This is the inevitable lot of all systems of pessimism, agnosticism, or atheism. Yet we must not pass final judgement upon the Gnostic without taking into account that striking *Hymn of the Soul* in the *Acts of Thomas*, to which I have already referred. It is too long to reproduce; you may easily read it in Mr. Burkitt's excellent Lectures upon *Early Eastern Christianity*. There was true religious feeling in the gifted man by whom this remarkable piece was composed.

It is sometimes thought that there was much religious infidelity under the Empire, but this is hardly true, except perhaps in the first century, which was in many respects a peculiar age. Juvenal complains that even children had ceased to believe in a future life, but the statements of the satirist must always be taken with a grain of salt. Let us listen rather to the Campanian farmer in Petronius[1]. He is grumbling about a prolonged drought; the colony, he says, is growing downwards like a cow's tail, and he cannot think what will happen, if neither gods nor men have pity on the township. 'For my part,' he goes on, 'I think everything comes from the gods, but nowadays people don't believe that heaven is heaven. Nobody keeps a fast, nobody cares a straw for Jupiter; they

[1] *Cena*, 44. Friedländer's edition of this book is full of valuable information.

all shut their eyes and count their money. In the old times the matrons would have gone up the hill in their best gowns, with bare feet and hair hanging down, and prayed to Jupiter for rain. And rain it did, in bucketfuls. It was then or never; and everybody laughed, like drowned rats. That is why the gods have the gout nowadays, because we are not religious.' The passage seems to tell both ways. There was indifference in the days of Nero, but there was also a good deal of rough old-fashioned piety. In fact the honest vulgarians who sat at Trimalchio's table believed not too little, but too much. Let us turn from these middle-class folk, and see how it was among the educated classes.

In the last days of the Republic we find Lucretius, one of the few poets of atheism. He tells in his stately hexameters the story of Iphigenia at Aulis, and bids us observe how belief in the gods led a father to steep his hands in the blood of his own daughter. 'Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum[1].' Human life begins in the throes of birth, and ends in the

[1] It is to be observed that Lucretius is roused to this fierce protest by the fables of the Greek mythology. Nobody felt bound to believe or to defend these stories. Educated people either rejected or allegorized them. In the East, wherever people could not speak Greek, they were unknown (see the *Clementine Homilies*, iv. 19). Where the grammar school exerted its influence they would be familiar, so far as they are contained in the recognized classic authors, and their power for moral corruption must have been considerable (see on this point, Aug. *Conf.* i. 16).

agony of death, and these ugly dreams of a future existence do but increase the misery and the sin. Lucretius finds the one hope of salvation in materialistic science, which he hails with rapture as the new and final revelation. 'Nothing is greater, more holy, more wonderful, or dearer' than Empedocles and the Atomists.

In the Augustan age Virgil moderates these transports. 'Happy the man,' he says, 'who has penetrated the causes of things, and has set his foot on all fears and inexorable fate[1].' Virgil was a religious man who believed in a future life, and knew that there are other fears, and worse fears, than those of earthquakes or eclipses. But the atheism of the old republican reappears, almost for the last time, in Pliny the elder, a man of immense learning and infinite credulity. But it reappears with a difference; all the rapture has gone. 'The one thing which is certain,' he writes, 'is that there is no certainty, and that there is nothing more wretched and more arrogant than man.' Some touch of the same melancholy strain is to be found in the historian Tacitus[2].

Before the death of Pliny the great line of the

[1] *Georg.* ii. 490.

[2] *Hist.* i. 3 'non esse curae deis securitatem nostram, esse ultionem.' He hoped that those Stoic teachers, who admitted the possibility of a future life for certain elect souls, might be right. *Agric.* 46 'Si quis piorum Manibus locus, si, ut sapientibus placet, non cum corpore extinguuntur magnae animae, placide quiescas.'

Roman Stoics had begun in Seneca and Musonius Rufus; the other most famous names are those of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. The writings of the two last are so well known that I must not dwell upon them at length, but something should be said. We may think that Epictetus is the greatest of them all. Stoicism was the natural creed of the poor, the afflicted, and the rebel, and it does not agree well either with the ill-earned magnificence of the unfortunate Seneca or with the imperial purple of Marcus. A Stoic millionaire or a Stoic Caesar is in a false position. We are tempted to regard Seneca as a hypocrite, and Marcus, partly because he was a good Stoic, was a very bad emperor. But Epictetus was a lame slave and a sturdy republican, and the harsh doctrines of the porch fit him like his own cloak. The morality of Stoicism was high and pure, but as stern as Calvinism, which in many features it strongly resembled. It had no milk for babes: Epictetus has great sympathy with the slave, but of women he speaks with the most acrid contempt, and children he dismisses as 'snivelling brats[1].'

Stoicism flourished mainly in the first century and among the discontented Roman grandees. The causes

[1] iii. 22. 77 *δύο ἢ τρία κακόρρυγχα παιδία.* ii. 4. 8 *τί οὖν; οὐκ εἰσὶν αἱ γυναῖκες κοιναὶ φύσει; κἀγὼ λέγω.* 'Your slave is your brother, descended from the same father Zeus,' i. 13, but women, children, and Caesar are outside the pale of this typical Stoic's charity.

of its decline were partly political; it was natural that the provinces, which looked to Caesar as their protector, and had good reason for rejoicing in the change of government, should take a view of the world in general very different from that of their old oppressors; but they were mainly religious. Stoicism was rigidly and puritanically ethical; this was its great merit; but it was strongly individualistic, it allowed no value to beauty or the emotions, and it had no clear belief in the immortality of the soul, or even in the existence of God [1]. These defects unfitted it for playing a part in the new world, and accordingly we find that, from the beginning of the second century, the great religious writers are almost exclusively Platonist [2].

Of these, again, it is not possible for me to speak in detail. One interesting figure is that of Dion

[1] Justin Martyr attached himself, when first he began to study philosophy, to a Stoic professor; 'but,' says he, 'when I could learn nothing from him about God, for he knew nothing himself and insisted that it was not a necessary branch of doctrine, I left him and went to a Peripatetic.' The Peripatetic suggested a fee, but this Justin thought unphilosophic. The Pythagorean to whom he next applied would not speak of religion till Justin could show that he understood music, astronomy, and geometry. Finally he turned to the Platonists, and from them made his way into the Church (*Trypho*, 2).

[2] I may perhaps venture to refer the reader to my little volume on *Neoplatonism* (S. P. C. K.). Constant Martha—*Les Moralistes sous l'Empire Romain*—gives an interesting and instructive account of the Stoics, Dion Chrysostom, and Lucian, but does not deal with the later Platonists. Zeller is still indispensable.

Chrysostom, the cheery optimistic sage, who, when driven out of Rome by Domitian, wandered through the world on foot with nothing in his pocket but the *Phaedo* of Plato and an oration of Demosthenes, living amongst the poor, and noting with a kindly eye their simple pious ways. Another is that of Plutarch whose histories were read by Shakespeare, and whose wise sayings are so constantly in the mouth of Jeremy Taylor. As Dion is the only classical author who speaks with understanding sympathy of the labouring poor, so Plutarch is the only one who treats women and the married life in worthy fashion. Benign good sense and a tone of what we may call chivalry mark this Boeotian squire, who was also a philosopher and a priest.

The line of Platonism runs on through Maximus Tyrius and the Neoplatonists. Some of these latter were little better than spiritualistic mediums; some of them we might call charlatans; but others were men of high intellectual and religious quality. Chief among them were Plotinus, in whose books Augustine found the whole Gospel of St. John except the Incarnation; we may call him also the father of modern metaphysics; and Proclus, whose philosophy with slight modification was adopted bodily by Dionysius the Areopagite, and in this new garb is quoted repeatedly with the highest respect by St. Thomas Aquinas. Let me give you by way of illustration a few sentences from Maximus

Tyrius, one of the less known of this brilliant succession of writers.

First of pleasure. The Platonist would not allow that pleasure was an end to be pursued. Like beauty, it is a charm on the face of goodness. Seize goodness, and you will gain happiness as well; make pleasure your aim, and you will find that you have grasped at the shadow and missed the reality. Sensual pleasure the philosopher rated very low. 'For there is nothing that can be so easily satisfied as the needs of the body. Art thou thirsty? there are fountains everywhere. Art thou hungry? there are beech-trees everywhere. Yon sun is warmer than any cloak; these meadows are the most artistic of shows, these flowers are nature's spicery. Let thy necessity bound thy desires. If thou goest beyond, thou givest the open field to pleasure, and shuttest up virtue within castle walls[1].'

Perhaps Maximus is giving the reins to his rhetoric when he talks of satisfying his hunger upon beech-nuts. But these Platonists were extremely abstemious, though they never paraded their self-denial. We

[1] iv. 3. Maximus is not so much a philosopher as a philosophic preacher, the most graceful of his class. No one conveys so favourable and attractive a conception of Platonism on its moral and religious side. No one shows us more clearly why Stoicism declined, or why Plato made so many Christians. He addresses himself not to students, but to people of ordinary education who want to live reasonable and virtuous lives.

ought to notice also the love of this philosopher for wild flowers. He gives expression to this feeling elsewhere, and justifies it. The senses sit on guard in the antechamber of the soul, and send in their message, as it were a sealed letter, to the prince, who opens, reads, and understands. Thus the beauty of the flower awakens in the intelligence the thought of God[1].

Of prayer he says that it should not be a petition, because all is ordered by the divine wisdom and goodness. 'I think it ought to be a talking to God[2].'

He defends idolatry[3]. The statue cannot really express the glory of God, who is 'father and creator of all things, older than the sun, older than heaven, stronger than time or eternity,' but it quickens our dull susceptibility, as the portrait of our beloved ones, or the lute on which they used to play, or the chair in which they used to sit recalls to our minds their bodily presence and character.

Attendant upon the Father of All is a host of divine but subordinate beings, the demons. 'Their nature is immortal in the second degree, and they are called secondary gods.' They are posted between earth and heaven, execute the decrees of providence, and form a chain of connexion between God and man.

[1] See the fine passages xvii. 10, 11; xvi. 8.
[2] xi. 8. [3] viii.

'Innumerable is the swarm of demons,

> For thrice ten thousand are there on the breast of mother earth;
> And every one immortal and a pursuivant of Zeus.

Some are healers of disease, some advise in difficulties, some are revealers of secrets, some are fellow-workers in the arts, some are companions in travel. Some are of the city, some of the fields, some of the sea, some of the dry land[1].' Some, again, are guardian angels, and give to each man his character.

Here we have the most notable doctrine of Neo-paganism, that of the demons. It is often said that the course of religious thought under the Empire was marked by a strong inclination in the direction of monotheism; and this is true, but not the whole truth. Philosophic thinkers, of whom there were few, recognized the necessity of bringing the celestial hierarchy into unity under one supreme head, and turned all the other deities into his officers. Celsus very aptly compared them to the proconsuls of Caesar. But we may find a better parallel in the constitution of the modern German Empire. All the gods of all the mythologies were 'mediatized' like the Kings of Bavaria and Saxony. But they were carefully kept alive, and received sovereign honours.

Again, there was great divergence in the conception

[1] xiv. 8.

of the demons. Maximus regards them as all good; they are 'angels and ministers of grace'; indeed he uses the word 'angel,' as did many others. But commonly it is allowed that many of the demons are evil, who can and will do man great harm, unless they are propitiated by magic formulae and by sacrifice.

Let us see how this worked out. I have said that Plutarch was an excellent man; but this is what he tells us about the demons. 'Black and ill-omened days on which men devour raw flesh, obscene cries at sacred altars, fasts and beatings of the breast do not belong to any god, but are propitiatory rites to keep off evil demons[1].' The same explanation is given of human sacrifices, which were not unknown, and of tales of barbarous lust, and painful expiations like that of Orestes after he had slain his mother. All these things belonged to the 'hard gods,' the Alastors. You will observe that Plutarch ascribes to the demons not only magic but all manifestations of repentance and remorse. What are we to expect of the vulgar, when a philosopher can speak like this? We have plenty of information on this point.

At the supper of Trimalchio the guests tell blood-curdling stories of werewolves and vampires. 'We wonder,' says the narrator, 'and believe, and, kissing the table, beseech the nighthags to keep in their own place while we return home[2].' Even a highly

[1] *De Defectu Oraculorum*, xiv. [2] *Cena*, 61 sqq.

accomplished and most vicious man, like Petronius, was afraid to go out in the dark. When Germanicus, the darling of the people, was carried off by an untimely death, men dragged the little images of the Penates out of their houses and flung them into the gutter. It was suspected that Germanicus had been murdered by Piso, and it is not improbable. Tacitus tells us that 'there were found stuffed into the walls of his palace, and into holes in the floor, leaden tablets inscribed with his name, bits of human bones with fragments of charred flesh, and other magical gear, by which it is believed that souls are devoted to the infernal gods[1].' We have plenty of these leaden tablets. One, found in a hot spring at Aretium[2], bears this inscription: 'Quintus Letinius Lupus, who is also called Caucadio, son of Sallustia Veneria or Veneriosa, him I arraign, devote, sacrifice to your deity, that ye, O boiling waters, ye Nymphs, or whatever else ye please to be called, may kill him within this year.' Notice what pains the rogue takes not to shoot the wrong man, giving the alias as well as the name of his victim and his victim's mother, and begging the deities not to be angry, if he is not quite

[1] *Ann.* ii. 69.

[2] Wordsworth, *Fragments and Specimens of Early Latin*, p. 231, is the source from which this instance is borrowed. Bishop Wordsworth refers to *Hermes*, iv, pp. 282 sqq., ed. Mommsen. For similar tablets see *CIL.* vi. 1. 140, 141. A very curious love-charm will be found in Deissmann, *Bibelstudien*, p. 28.

sure of their proper style and title. Magic papyri exist in great numbers. The formulae were used mostly perhaps as philtres or for the recovery of lost property, but it is evident that they were often turned to much darker purposes. Even love-potions were bad enough and led to horrid deeds. Faustina, the wife of Marcus Aurelius, was supposed to have been bewitched by a gladiator. On the advice of his Chaldaean wizards the Emperor put the man to death, and made Faustina bathe herself in his blood [1]. Such is the story that was told; people thought it not incredible [2]. We have epitaphs on the graves of children who were supposed to have been killed by witchcraft through the agency of the Nymphs [3]. We

[1] *Vita Marci*, 19.

[2] Some of the stories of witchcraft we might be tempted to regard as purely fanciful, for instance, Horace's Canidia, *Epod.* v, or Lucan's Erichtho, *Phars.* vi. 507, or again the extravagant romance of Apuleius. But there can be no doubt that they were believed by the great mass of the people, and even by educated men; see the *Philopseudes* of Lucian. Even Marcus Aurelius, Stoic and sceptical as he was, showed himself as superstitious as anybody in the stress of the Marcomannian war, when he surrounded himself with Egyptian and Chaldaean magicians, and 'celebrated foreign rites,' *Vita*, 13. In particular he threw two lions and a quantity of spices into the Danube (Lucian, *Alex.* 48), on the advice of Alexander of Abonoteichos. Ammianus Marcellinus tells us that St. Athanasius was regarded as a powerful magician (xv. 7). Even by Christians the saint was so regarded; and this fact helps us to understand the otherwise almost incredible story of the Synod of Tyre.

[3] *CIL.* vi. 4. 29195 on a child of eight who was 'raptus a Nymphis.' The father's name was Ulpius Nymphicus, and we may

look upon these airy delicate spirits of the fountain as the most charming creations of ancient fancy, but they were regarded by the people who worshipped them as most horrible and malignant beings.

I must not attempt to speak in detail of dreams and omens, or the way in which almost everybody, high or low, was ridden by these miserable obsessions. Those who wish to know the extent of the evil may read the book of Artemidorus[1]. It is written in excellent Greek—he was an educated and, in a very perverted sense, an intelligent man—and the text has come down to us in an excellent state of preservation.

wonder whether the nymphs were in this case a sort of family banshee.

[1] An Italian version of Artemidorus, published in 1548 and reissued in 1558, was eagerly bought because just at that time lotteries were instituted at Venice, and people hoped that the old pagan would teach them how to dream the winning numbers. Unfortunately, lotteries not having been known in his days, he could give them no help, and his popularity immediately vanished. See the preface to Herscher's edition. It is to the credit of Artemidorus (and he needs all the credit that can be found for him) that his friends, though they often dreamed about horses, never appear to have dreamed about betting. His book is valuable to the modern student chiefly for the curious bits of information scattered up and down its pages. Does any other ancient writer tell us that it was customary for a condemned man to carry his own cross? Artemidorus assures us that this was a common dream (ii. 56), and we may judge from the fact how many must have been in dread of crucifixion, and how common the spectacle was. He also tells us that there was no better omen than to dream of an amarantine crown (i. 77). Cp. 1 Pet. v. 4.

It is to be feared that the reason of this is that a long series of Christian transcribers thought his abject nonsense very interesting and very valuable.

Among the better educated classes this superstition appears later on as spiritualism. Towards the end of the second century we meet with the first famous medium in Alexander of Abonoteichos. Whatever the modern adept can do his ancient counterpart could do much better—telepathy, floating in the air, table-rapping, writing on locked slates, clairvoyance. Maximus, the perverter of Julian the Apostate, could make a marble statue smile. At first we find a sort of Society of Psychical Research; Lucian and his friend Celsus investigate the phenomena, and arrive at the conclusion that they are produced by imposition. But neither ridicule nor exposure could kill the superstition. Alexander was worshipped as a god after his death. Spiritualism was patronized and fostered by the rising school of Neoplatonism, a school which numbered among its adherents many acute thinkers and many accomplished men of science. It seduced Julian from Christianity, and maintained itself for nearly two centuries after his death. Indeed, the belief in magic and witchcraft passed over into the Church, and caused many more judicial murders in the Middle Ages, and down to quite recent times, than under the Empire[1].

[1] The old Roman law against witchcraft was very severe. The

It is probably not too hard a thing to say that demon worship was the really operative religion of the vast mass of the population of the Empire. Gods who like to do harm are always much nearer to the ordinary man than gods who promise only spiritual blessings in return for the distasteful virtues of self-control and moral purity. The philosophers were quite awake to the danger of superstition, though they did very little indeed to cure it, and have left us many definitions of this vice. Theophrastus, Varro, and Plutarch call it the servile fear of God, dread, that is to say, of the divine power without the complementary belief in the divine wisdom and love; and this is a just observation. Maximus Tyrius says that the pious man is the friend of God, while the superstitious man is the flatterer of God; a flatterer

administration of a philtre was punishable by labour in the mines or exile. Those who celebrated nocturnal rites for the purpose of putting a spell upon anybody were crucified or thrown to the beasts. Human sacrifice was forbidden on pain of death. Magicians were to be burnt alive. Even the possessor of magical books was liable to death or deportation; see Paullus, *Sent.* xxiii. 14 sqq. But Horace, though he says that Canidia will be stoned by the neighbours, does not speak of any legal prosecution or penalty, nor, so far as I remember, does any other of those writers who have been mentioned in the note on p. 78. There was a sanguinary raid upon magicians under Valentinian and Valens (Amm. Marcell. xxix. 1); it was at this time that John Chrysostom came into imminent peril through fishing a magical book out of the river Orontes; but this raid was caused by the not altogether groundless suspicion of Valens that his own life had been menaced.

like a cunning slave who tries to coax and wheedle his master into doing what he wants. This, again, is true, though it gives a different aspect of the same disease. The Christian Platonists, Clement and Origen of Alexandria, would say that superstition is the thinking unworthy thoughts of God, and in this we may find the root of the evil, whatever practical form it may assume. It springs from the 'lie in the soul,' from an imperfect and unworthy conception of the divine nature, of that perfect unity of power, wisdom, and goodness to which we give the name of God.

Plutarch again tells us that there are two extremes, atheism and superstition, and that superstition is the less evil of the two, and we may think that upon the whole he is right. It is true that the Roman atheists, Lucretius and Pliny the Elder, were better men than Apuleius, who acted upon the belief that, if he shaved his head and put on the linen robe, Isis would suffer him to amuse himself as he pleased; but they were probably not so good as Aristides the Rhetor, or Porphyry, or Proclus, who were full of superstition, which, though vain and intellectually degrading, was yet not noxious, and left room for virtues of a very attractive kind. There are superstitions and superstitions. All are foolish, but not all are base; some are defects only by comparison with heights of wisdom and goodness which few can discern and still fewer can attain.

Many writers, including the late Lord Acton, have spoken in language of the strongest reprehension of the superstition of the early Church. It begins about the middle of the third century; we see it first distinctly in Cyprian, Novatian, and Gregory Thaumaturgus [1]; and in the fourth century it is very strongly marked. It showed itself partly in asceticism, partly in credulity, partly in persecution. Asceticism we shall understand better when we have passed in review the moral condition of the old heathen society, for you cannot fairly judge the men who fled from the world until you have seen the world from which they fled. The credulity no one can doubt who reads the *Lausiac History*, or Prudentius, or Paulinus of Nola, or Sulpicius Severus, or indeed almost any of the Fathers. It is a grave intellectual blot; it was worse perhaps in the West than in the East; it clouded the

[1] See the stories told by Cyprian in the *de lapsis*, 25 sq., in which magical powers are attributed to the consecrated elements. Novatian, quite in pagan or mediaeval fashion, made his disciples swear upon the Eucharist that they would not forsake him and go back to Cornelius; Eus. *H. E.* vi. 43. 18. Dionysius of Alexandria tells of a repentant apostate, Sarapion, who could not die until he had received the sacrament; as the priest was unable to go in person the sacred bread was sent by the hands of a boy; Eus. *H. E.* vi. 44. Gregory Thaumaturgus once passed the night in a heathen temple. Next day the priest, finding that his gods had fled, pursued Gregory with menaces and execrations. The saint gave him a piece of parchment on which he had written 'Gregory to Satan. Enter.' The priest laid this upon the altar, and immediately the demons returned to their abode. See the *Life* by Gregory Nyssen.

judgement and affected the doctrine of the Church, though not in the essential points. It added much that was needless and in a degree harmful, but it did not seriously vitiate the Christian ideal. We may notice that it was largely fostered by the desire to quicken the evangelization of the world. Good and intelligent men, like Gregory Thaumaturgus, the pupil of Origen, sanctioned practices of which they did not approve, in order to make it easier for the heathen to come over [1], and the ignorant, undisciplined converts thus acquired sensibly lowered the tone of the whole community. The Fathers would have defended themselves by the argument that a superstitious Christian is better than a superstitious heathen, and something may be allowed for this plea. But the leaven affects the whole of the bread; and it is as true of the Church, as it is of Roman education, that in proportion as its area broadened its depth fell off.

[1] 'For, having observed that the childish and uneducated mass were held fast to idolatry by bodily delights, in order that the main principle, the habit of looking to God rather than to their vain objects of worship, might be established in them, he suffered them to delight themselves in the memorials of the holy martyrs and to make merry and exult, thinking that their life would gradually be changed into a more virtuous and scrupulous pattern.' See his *Life* in the works of Gregory of Nyssa, vol. iii, p. 574, ed. Morel, 1638. The object, adds the Nyssen, has already been attained. The best commentary is supplied by Paulinus of Nola, who followed the same policy in the fourth century in Campania. The object was to some extent attained; but the church-ale was so like the old heathen festival that it was really the same thing, though a little better at every point.

As for persecution, of which Lord Acton speaks in such scathing words, we must not attempt to justify or to extenuate it. It began at once in Constantine's treatment of the Donatists, and culminated in the terrible laws of Theodosius, of which the best that we can say is that they do not appear to have been very often applied to their full extent. It is a mistake to suppose that the Church learned cruelty from the heathen, who indeed were very spasmodic and inefficient persecutors. The old persecutions were neither very numerous nor very fatal, and, so far as they did not originate in the fury of the vulgar mob, were almost entirely political, like that of Queen Elizabeth, not inquisitorial, like that of Queen Mary. But the Christian emperors and bishops were guided not by the example of their old enemies, but by that same mistaken reverence for the Hebrew Scriptures which caused so much injury in other directions. Because the Jew had been commanded to put the blasphemer to death, it appeared to be the sacred duty of the Christian also not to suffer the heretic to live. Here we see most distinctly the evil results of that playing with history which was inculcated in the Roman schools.

I said a moment ago that paganism to some extent infected the Church. Let us notice in conclusion how the Church reacted upon paganism. Many illustrations might be given; some from very early times. They

may be found in the worship of Mithra, in the biography of Apollonius, in Maximus Tyrius, in the historian Ammianus Marcellinus, in the life of Proclus, the Neoplatonist, who was a thorough-paced ecclesiastic, and in many other places. Especially in the great Roman pagans of the fourth century, of whom the chief was Symmachus, the friend of popes and bishops. He was a strong pagan, and wanted to bury a fallen vestal virgin alive, just to keep up the good old rule[1], yet as against Christianity he went no further than to maintain that 'there are more roads to the great secret than one[2].' But the fine flower of dying heathenism is to be found in the epitaph inscribed by Paulina on the tomb of her distinguished husband, Agorius Praetextatus[3]. Let me try to translate it for you.

> The glory of my proud ancestral line
> Was that it made me worthy to be thine.
> For all my light thou art and all my fame,
> Agorius, noblest of the Roman name,
> Light of the senate, and thy fatherland,
> Not of me only, but of all who scanned
> Thy genius, worth and learning, which combined
> The crown of virtue round thy brow entwined.
> For all that Latin sage or Greek has taught,
> And all that heaven to earth has nearer brought,

[1] Symmachus, *Epp.* ix. 147, 148, ed. Seeck.

[2] 'Uno itinere non potest perveniri ad tam grande secretum'; *Rel.* iii, ed. Seeck, p. 282.

[3] *CIL.* vi. 1. 1779.

In dulcet verse or rugged prose expressed,
Flowed from thy lips, which bettered still the best.
But these are trifles. In thy pious mind
The secrets of all mysteries lay enshrined.
Thou knewest well what worship should be given
To each of all the many gods of heaven;
And madest me partner of thy faith to be,
Sister of gods and men, and true to thee.
Why should I count thy titles, passing toys
Which men heaped on thee? These were not thy joys.
These were but fleeting gauds of earth; to fame
The priestly fillet was thy highest claim.
O husband, teacher, thou whose loving care
Discipled me in virtue, saved from the snare
Of death, and led within the temple gate,
The handmaid of the gods to consecrate,
Thou wast my sponsor in the mysteries,
Thou Cybele and Attis didst appease
For me with blood of bulls; thou didst teach me
The triple secret of dark Hecate,
And make me meet to worship at the shrine
Of Eleusinian Ceres. It is thine,
Thy gift alone, that all men call me blest.
Thou madest me paragon from East to West,
Unknown of all yet known of all, for why
Should men not praise me, when thy wife was I?
Lo! Roman matrons shape their lives by me,
And think their children beauteous, if like thee.
Great men, good women own thy master hand,
And propagate thy virtues through the land.
Now comfortless, thy widow not thy wife,
I mourn. O, if the gods had spared thy life
And let me die!—yet bliss it is to me
That thine I was, and thine again shall be.

If I have not spoiled these lines in the translation, you will think them, though not poetry of the highest

kind, yet tender, graceful, and deeply religious. They give us an admirable picture of paganism in its best days. Praetextatus was a very great personage indeed, a man of the bluest blood, dignified with every honour that the Emperor could bestow, and enormously wealthy[1]. He was a convinced pagan, and there can be no doubt that he was as polytheistical as a man can be. But the important thing to notice is that he was a priest, and a priest of a new kind. He took his priesthood quite seriously, regarding it as his highest title to consideration, adorning it with a vast range of theological learning, and taking infinite pains with the religious education of his noble and devoted wife. And Paulina must have been worthy of his care. Proud she was, no doubt, for she too came of a race of princes, but with a pride sweetened and chastened by that strange creed which, we are tempted to think, could only make men worse.

Praetextatus and Paulina belong to the age of Julian the Apostate, who endeavoured to destroy the Church with weapons borrowed from the Church's armoury. They could hardly have been such as we see them, unless Christianity had taught them what priests and temples ought to be.

If we compare them with their contemporaries and

[1] Praetextatus is the leading personage in the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius. See Dill, *Roman Society in the last century of the Roman Empire*; Glover, *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century*.

equals in rank who were friends and disciples of St. Jerome—and we have ample means for making the comparison—we shall find that these high pagans were superior in intellectual culture, in their sense of duty to the state, and even in their view of the possibilities of the married life. It is only the last point that need surprise us. The task of the Church was not to improve, but to remake the foundations of education, politics, and morality. It was a gigantic task, not yet completed after nearly two thousand years of effort. We must not be surprised to find that in that short chapter, which comprises the history of the old Roman Empire, the outward proofs of the great transformation are imperfect and unequal.

IV

MORAL AND SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE EMPIRE

It is never easy and rarely safe to make broad assertions about the morality of a whole people. It is perilous to generalize even about our own people in our own time. We are swimming in the stream, as it were, and cannot lift our heads high enough to see exactly in what direction we are being carried. When we attempt to criticize a foreign contemporaneous nation, the difficulty is, as we are well aware, greatly enhanced. There is a lack of sympathy, which prevents us from really understanding what we see. Now the Roman Empire is divided from us by a vast stretch of time; and it was not a nation but a world, immensely diverse and unequal in itself, and unlike our own world at every point. What is true of the patrician is not true of the slave; what is true of the Greek or Italian is not true of the African or Briton. It is an extraordinary scene that we are looking upon. The nearest analogy that we can find is the state of things existing in India, since the conquests of Clive and Warren Hastings.

Another difficulty arises from the nature of our sources of information.

The great writers, from whom our ideas used to be mainly derived, belong almost entirely to the first century, or to the early years of the second. They are, with few exceptions, men of pure and amiable character. You might pick holes in Horace, charming as he is, but Virgil, Lucan, Statius, Persius are all admirable. Round these great luminaries circled a host of minor stars—poetasters without end—who filled up every day of the Roman season, and even the month of August, with their recitations, absurd figures no doubt, the product of an absurd school, but not often immoral. In prose we have Seneca and Epictetus, the two Plinies, Quintilian, Tacitus, Suetonius, Dion Chrysostom, Plutarch. Juvenal again was a good man, though he wrote chiefly about bad ones. These were the popular authors. Ovid, Petronius, Martial, are deeply corrupted by the vices of their time; but their own people knew this quite as well as we do.

The great pagans were as great in their own days as they are in modern times, and their writings have come down to us because they appealed to the conscience and intelligence of their countrymen. Virgil in particular was almost adored, and he ranks among the great ones of all the ages. No man so clearly shows that even in evil times the way to abiding fame in the kingdom of letters is to lift up the reader to

dignified and beautiful conceptions of life and duty. He did not speak merely to the aristocracy. His verses were sung at middle-class dinner parties, scribbled on the walls of Pompeian houses, recited by children in third-rate schools. We may see the very faces and figures of the people who made his fame in the broken frieze of the *Ara Pacis*, which has been most skilfully reconstructed by Dr. Petersen. It represents a religious procession, men, women, and children gathered together to thank the gods for the Augustan Peace, stately men, sweet women, innocent-looking children, the children who sang the *Carmen Saeculare* of Horace. They are the people who rose up when Virgil entered the theatre, and acclaimed him with marks of distinction reserved by custom for members of the imperial house. They look fit to be the masters of the world.

Still in some respects the age of the Julian and Claudian Caesars is a time apart. Towards the end of the Republic enormous sums of money were brought into Rome by victorious generals. At the same time the old frugal habits of the farmer state were broken down by the licence of warfare and plunder, by familiarity with the softer and more luxurious habits of the East, and by the sight of indulgences as yet undreamed of, but now easily within reach. The great Romans found themselves in the position of the English nobles of the Restoration, or of the nabobs of

the eighteenth century, and plunged headlong into the newly found delights. The city was remodelled on a scale of great magnificence; enormous palaces, filled with armies of slaves and furniture of the costliest description, replaced the modest dwellings of the old patricians. Personal indulgence of every kind became a study, and in the times of Claudius and Nero extravagance rose into a great flare-up, in which many threw aside all self-restraint. At the same time the demand for articles of luxury greatly enriched the mercantile class, and many of these, like Trimalchio, aped the manners of their betters, and flung away money with both hands. This is the time described by the satirists. There is much truth in their diatribes, but there is also a narrow spirit of conservatism, to which every departure from the good old days of Cincinnatus seemed a proof of the depravity of mankind. That marble should be brought from Africa, or oysters from Britain, or that men should sit upon feather cushions, or drink from silver or glass, seemed to be all of one piece with the enormities of Messalina. We must discount their invectives. At most they strike only a limited class, whose heads were turned by the revolution of the world. With the accession of the Flavians a new order begins. The old patriciate was in great measure exterminated or ruined. Men from the Italian country towns, or even from the provinces, made their way into the senate in increasing

numbers, bringing with them, says Tacitus, 'their domestic thrift,' and Vespasian himself belonged to the same class. We may say that the Empire begins at this date. After this time we find an universal system of state education; the new religions come into play; the senate becomes a chamber of peers representing the whole Empire; the civil service is organized; great jurists sit upon the imperial council; the slave is taken to some extent under the protection of the law [1]; suicide is no longer the fashion [2], and the shameless profligacy and brutality of the old nobility disappear.

Another difficulty in our way arises from the seclusion of the ancient home life, and the consequent

[1] 'Servos a dominis occidi vetuit, eosque iussit damnari per iudices, si digni essent; lenoni et lanistae servum vel ancillam vendi vetuit causa non praestita . . . si dominus in domo interemptus esset, non de omnibus servis quaestionem haberi sed de is qui per vicinitatem poterant sentire praecepit' (*Vita Hadriani*, 18). In the same passage we read that Hadrian abolished the *ergastula*, but, if the statement is correct, the prohibition produced no effect.

[2] Hadrian wished to commit suicide when the physicians gave him no hope of recovery, but Antoninus Pius would not permit him to carry out his resolution (*Vita Ant. Pii*, 2). Artemidorus assures us that suicide was regarded as an infamy and as a sin. Ἀναρτήσας ἑαυτὸν ἐτελεύτησε τὸν βίον, ὡς μηδὲ ἀποθανὼν ἔχειν ὄνομα. Τούτους γὰρ μόνους ἐν νεκρῶν δείπνοις οὐ καλοῦσιν οἱ προσήκοντες (i. 4). But Pliny approves of suicide, provided only that it was committed with due deliberation (*Epp.* i. 22), and there are many tales of Stoics who made their own exit from the stage in very theatrical fashion. Perhaps the most characteristic is that of the worthy old savage Corellius Rufus (*Epp.* i. 12).

rarity of glimpses into the family circle, especially of the middle and lower classes.

We know the ancient town from its ruins, many of which—Pompeii in Italy, Timgad and Lambaesis in Africa, Silchester and Uriconium in our own country — have been exhaustively rummaged and elaborately described. We know also very fully the life of the streets and public places, but we very seldom find ourselves behind the door of the house. The great writers of antiquity wrote for grandees and for men, and knew and cared very little about the ways of small people or of women. They never really studied what we call 'the human document.' They always generalize, and what they describe is not a character but a type, as I have already remarked when speaking of the rhetorical commonplaces. Such sketches are often extremely clever and amusing, but they do not give us living people. The only writer of the Imperial times who really drew from life was Petronius; we might call him the Roman Zola. He shows us real men and women, rich vulgar tradespeople, talking in dialect and behaving just as such folks would do. But it is not a sympathetic picture. Petronius was a great noble, exquisitely corrupt, and looking down on the citizens with ineffable scorn because they aped his vices, like some of the dramatists of our own Restoration.

Dion Chrysostom, a delightful man, who had wan-

dered about the world as an exile, and knew poor people and their ways, has told us of some Greek peasants, by whom he was sheltered for a time, when he had been shipwrecked on the rocks of Euboea. He dwells with evident pleasure on their simple, pious, kindly ways. Such passages are unfortunately very rare in the classic authors. But of late years we have been able in increasing measure to supplement our scanty literary sources by other information which, though not quite of the kind we desire, is yet very considerable, and has the great merit of being contemporaneous and accurate. Much valuable knowledge may be gleaned from the law-books, much more from the enormous collections of inscriptions, much more, again, though chiefly as regards Egypt, from the papyri. If all this chaotic mass of facts had been indexed, annotated, and explained with the industry and intelligence lavished by Dr. Grenfell and Dr. Hunt upon their admirable volumes, the task of the student would have been immensely facilitated. Even as it is the church historian, though he has to wade through masses of stuff which for his special purpose are irrelevant, cannot be too grateful for the light thrown upon his subject by the jurist, the economist, and above all the archaeologist.

The papyri in particular are full of interest. Here you find, though often sadly mutilated, the every-day documents of an orderly and respectable people,

their wills, marriage contracts, and business accounts, their dealings with the police and courts of law, their dinner invitations and cook's bills, their letters of condolence, their gossip, and little, intimate, confidential notes. The general impression which we gather agrees, not with the worst, but with the best of our other witnesses. What we find in Egypt is the same kind of society on a lower plane that is described by Pliny the younger or by Plutarch.

The epitaphs, again, tell much the same tale. Some are sceptical and resemble in tone the pathetic lines of the dying Hadrian[1]:—

> Little soul, so restless, so pretty,
> Guest and comrade of the body,
> Whither now art thou minded to fly,
> Pale, cold, and naked,
> Never to jest any more?

Some are frankly negative and epicurean. 'I was nothing, I am nothing; thou who livest eat, drink, amuse thyself, come,' are the words inscribed by a Spanish father on the tomb of his eight-year-old son[2], and there are others of the same type. Some, again, but very few, are frankly licentious.

> Balnea, vina, Venus, corrumpunt corpora nostra;
> Sed vitam faciunt,

[1] 'Animula vagula, blandula': in the *Vita Hadriani*, 25.

[2] *CIL.* ii. 1434.

is a specimen[1], engraved upon the tomb of a man who cannot have been a very reputable person. More are marked by bitter complaint against the cruelty of the gods, or a hopeless pessimism.

> O miseros homines, vivunt qui vivere nolunt,
> Vivere qui debent fato moriuntur acerbo,

are the words in which a pagan priest sums up his philosophy of life[2]. 'I, Procope, lift up my hands against the gods, who cut short my innocent life,' is the protest of a young girl. So Julian the Apostate, when he was struck down by the fatal lance, splashed his blood up towards the sun, saying, 'Drink thy fill.' But many epitaphs are of very different character. 'This is the place of rest of Vincentius. Many have gone before me; I wait for all. Eat, drink, be merry, come to me. While thou livest do well; this thou wilt carry with thee.' On the same stone is a picture of Vibia, the wife of Vincentius. She is being led

[1] *CIL.* vi. 3. 15258. Still more coarsely outspoken is vi. 3. 17985.

[2] *CIL.* v. 2. 7917. Similar complaints are not uncommon in the Roman inscriptions: see vi. 2. 6319, 10969, 15038, 15077; vi. 3. 15454, 15546. Perhaps the most tragic is vi. 4. 27227 'Ego sum quae in Carinis peperi. O di superi et inferi. O misera mater.' So vi. 2. 5534 'Causa latet fati; partum tamen esse loquuntur. Sed, quaecumque fuit, tam cito non merui.' A remarkable phrase occurs in vi. 3. 15160 'Filiis suis infelicissimis, qui aetate sua non sunt fruniti, fecit mater scelerata'; cp. 3. 21899; 4. 35769. Here the premature death of the child is regarded as the consequence of the parents' sins.

through an archway by a draped figure, beneath which are the words *Bonus Angelus*, 'the Good Angel[1].' Vincentius was a worshipper of Mithra. You will see that, though he repeats the heathenish phrase of the Spanish father, he has a clear belief in a future life, in which he will be reunited to his Vibia, and be rewarded for his good deeds. The 'good angel' is probably borrowed from Christianity. There is, as I have already pointed out, some reason for thinking that Mithraism was not untouched by the Gospel. But there are many purely pagan epitaphs which express a belief in the immortality of the soul[2].

[1] *CIL.* vi. 1. 142. There are other inscriptions which have a Christian ring but are probably not Christian—vi. 2. 7578, on a child who died 120 A.D.; the epitaph ends with the words 'Tu reddas, Aeterne, piis solacia semper, Et vitam serves cunctis generisque (? generique) piorum' (this may be Mithraic); vi. 4. 29642 'Dulcis apud Manes Zoe benedicta moraris, Tu secura iaces nobis reliquisti querelas. Praecesti hospitium dulce parare tuis'; vi. 4. 29265, on a wife, 'quam ne lacrimere precor et potius benedicas manibus eius.' On the other hand there are epitaphs in which Christianity appears to be contaminated by heathenism. Thus in the African inscriptions, *CIL.* viii. 1. 450 is one on Astius Vindicianus, who was 'vir clarissimus et flamen perpetuus.' The stone bears the Christian monogram. That Christians were sometimes *flamines* we learn from the canons of the synod of Elvira, 4 and 55 (see Hefele). There are several instances of 'D. M. S.' combined with 'in pace.'

[2] Perhaps the best instance is vi. 4. 34635 'Fossor, vide ne fodias, Deus magnum oculum habet'; though it is only indirect. But there are many in every volume; see iii. 406, 686, 1759, 1992, 3397, 6414, 7407, 7584. In vi. 1. 12072 a husband begs his dead wife to pray to the gods for him. Vision in dreams was regarded as a proof

Let us come closer to our subject by passing in review the great domestic relations, and first that of wife and husband. We have seen what a great Roman matron of the fourth century might be; let us now take one of the Augustan age, Turia, the wife of Q. Lucretius Vespillo [1]. She is described for us in a long epitaph, or rather funeral oration, written by her husband. The language is steeped in strong emotion, and bears the clearest marks of sincerity. Turia's parents had been murdered in the evil times of the proscriptions, and the first act of this girl—she must have been quite a girl at the time—was to get justice done upon the assassins. Her husband, Vespillo, was sent into exile by the all-powerful triumvirs, and a plot was laid to strip him of his property. She managed to baffle the plot, and even

of continued existence; see *CIL.* vi. 1. 18817 'Ita peto vos, manes sanctissimae, commendatum habeatis meum carum, et vellitis huic indulgentissimi esse horis nocturnis ut eum videam, et etiam me fato suadere vellit, ut ego possim dulcius et celerius aput eum pervenire.' Perhaps M. Fustel de Coulanges is wrong in identifying the Di Manes with the spirit of the dead. The monuments use phrases in which this identification seems to be made, but they use others in which the Manes appear rather as guardian angels. The two conceptions meet in that of the Genius, or Ka, the heavenly twin or double, who is at one and the same time the self and the god of the individual man. This curious confused belief is of immemorial antiquity. See le Page Renouf, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 147; Burkitt, *Early Eastern Christianity*, p. 215; Moulton, 'It is His Angel,' in *J. T. S.*, vol. iii, p. 514; Frazer, *Golden Bough*, iii. 351 sqq.

[1] *CIL.* vi. 1. 1527.

obtained her husband's pardon from Octavianus. For forty-one years she lived in unbroken harmony with Vespillo, who tells of her chastity, her courtesy, her diligence in spinning, her 'religion without superstition,' her moderation in dress, her unvarying goodness to her own relations and to his. Only once was there any serious disagreement between the two. All their children died young, and Turia begged Vespillo to divorce her and re-marry, lest the stock should come to an end. He vowed that nothing but death should part them, and after her death adopted a daughter whom she had selected for him. 'May thy manes,' he says in conclusion, 'leave thee in peace, and keep thee so.' May we not say that this fine pair were not far from the Kingdom of God?

You will notice that Vespillo regards divorce with horror. Marriage is to him a sacred and lifelong bond, which nothing can cancel as long as love remains. You will notice also that he has a strong desire for sons and daughters to perpetuate the name of the famous Lucretian house. The same things are true also of Pliny and of Pliny's friends. We should remember this when we read of that childlessness which was the curse of smart society in Rome. What is true of many is not true of all[1].

[1] On the monuments we find many parents boasting of the number of their children. See *CIL.* vi. 2. 12845 'Nam patri similes uno de coniuge nati Tres sunt florentes iuvenili robore vitae Et virgo tenera gestans aetate iuventam.'

Shortly after the time of Vespillo an alteration in the ceremonial of marriage abolished what was called the *manus*, or power, of the husband. It was designed to secure the property of married women, but it made divorce much easier and more common[1]. Seneca, a professed woman-hater, tells us that many fashionable ladies dated the year not by the consuls, but by their husbands[2]. But in the epitaphs two not uncommon words are *virginius* and *virginia*[3]. They

[1] The old religious marriage by *Confarreatio*, under which divorce was almost impossible, was all but obsolete in the time of Tiberius, see Tac. *Ann.* iv. 16. By the middle of the second century the *conventio in manum* was no longer in use; see Gaius, *Instit.* i. 110, 111 'Olim itaque tribus modis in manum conveniebant, usu, farreo, coemptione . . . sed hoc totum ius partim legibus sublatum est, partim ipsa desuetudine obliteratum est.' When the *manus* was avoided the wife remained in the power of her father, and could appeal to him against her husband. Apparently under the new rule the wife could divorce the husband, even when he was not a consenting party. No trial was needed, and hardly any form. Under the old law it seems doubtful whether the wife could in any circumstances divorce her husband.

[2] *de Ben.* iii. 16. 2. It may be noticed that Seneca's coarse diatribe *de matrimonio* would have perished altogether, if it had not been for St. Jerome, who quoted from it largely and with approval in his treatise against Jovinian.

[3] *CIL.* vi. 2. 11731 'quorum corpora virginia hic condita sunt ad bene quiescendum.' So also vii. 4. 34035, 34728. In vi. 4. 31711 we have 'univira'; in vi. 3. 22657, on a wife who died aged sixty-six, 'quae vixit cum eo a virginitate sine ulla macula ann. xxxiv'; vi. 2. 14404 'In cineres versa es tumuloque inclusa; cicadae Diceris coniux una fuisse viri'—the cricket chirping on her tomb will proclaim that she was never divorced. Constantly we find

denote a husband who never had but the one wife, a wife who never had but the one husband. Many people must have regarded an unbroken marriage as a great blessing and a strong claim to sympathy.

You may notice again that the chief virtue ascribed by Vespillo to Turia is courage. She championed her husband's cause with dauntless intrepidity, at a time when she could not speak a word in his behalf without endangering her own life. These great Roman dames were not wanting in masculine virtues, and their training was such as to darken the harsher shade in their disposition. They were well educated by private tutors, who were often Greek slaves of corrupt morals. As girls they lived in great seclusion. Their marriage, which took place at a very early age (fourteen or fifteen [1]), was arranged for them, and there was no love romance. But the moment these children became matrons they found themselves absolute queens of an immense establishment, numbering from 400 to 1,000 people, able to gratify every whim, able to make fortunes and to mar them, able even, down to the time of Hadrian at least, to crucify a tirewoman who let the mirror drop. There was no check at all upon them except the will of the

'quacum,' or 'quocum, vixit annis—sine querela,' or 'sine offensa,' or 'sine stomacho,' or 'sine verbo scabro.'

[1] Or younger. *CIL.* vi. 2. 14930 on a wife married at thirteen; vi. 3. 15488 'cum quem (qua) vixi ab infantia'; 18412, wife married at eleven.

husband, and perhaps some wholesome dread of the Matrons' Parliament—the *matronarum conventus*—a curious institution, a sort of legalized Almack's, to which every lady of a certain position was admitted upon marriage[1]. The matrons regulated etiquette and possibly interfered in cases of scandal, at any rate they talked very freely about them.

It is no wonder that many of these child-wives did very monstrous things. On the other hand there were many admirable wives. But Roman tales of feminine devotion are often very fierce, like that of Arria[2], who, when her husband was condemned to die, first struck the dagger into her own bosom and then handed it to him, saying, 'Paetus, it does not hurt.' An inscription, carved on a rock at Cagliari, tells us how Cassius Philippus was banished to Sardinia, how his wife Atilia Pomptilla went with him and shared his prison. In that pestilential climate he fell

[1] On the *Matronarum Conventus* see Friedländer.

[2] For Arria the elder, wife of Caecina Paetus, see Pliny, *Epp.* iii. 16. In the palmy days of Stoicism there were many of these heroic dames—Annia Pollitta, wife of Rubellius Plautus, Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 10; Paulina, wife of Seneca, Tac. *Ann.* xv. 64; Arria the younger, wife of Thrasea, Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 34; Fannia, widow of Helvidius, Pliny, *Epp.* vii. 19. Pliny tells us also of a wife of lower degree, who, finding that her husband was afflicted with an incurable disease, clasped him in her arms and sprang with him out of a window into the lake of Como. 'Quod factum,' he continues, 'ne mihi quidem qui municeps, nisi proxime, auditum est; non quia minus illo clarissimo Arriae facto, sed quia minor'; *Epp.* vi. 24.

deadly sick; the wife killed herself as an offering in his stead to the infernal gods. Her sacrifice was accepted, and the man recovered[1]. Another Alcestis was a Greek matron named Callicratea. She too gave herself to death 'for her excellent husband Zeno, the only husband whom she had clasped to her bosom, whom her heart prized above the light of the sun or her dear children[2].' We cannot doubt the love or the unselfishness of such wives, nor can we doubt that they would be pure and faithful mates. But there is something of the tigress in them.

In Greece the moral tone was as a rule severer and more humane. There the tone of thought ran rather towards Atticism and Platonism than towards Stoicism; and Platonism honoured women, not for the harsh virtues of the Amazon, but for the graces which made them charming companions, for the delicate intuitions which often pierce more profoundly into truth than the stiff, sharp instruments of masculine logic. The great women of Roman literature are all of the virago type; they did not blench at the sight of blood, and they would turn down their thumbs in the amphitheatre when a gladiator fell. When good they were like Arria, when bad like Messalina, always proud, fearless, and masculine. The Greek heroines are of gentler mould, like Penelope, or Andromache, or

[1] *CIG* 5711; Friedländer, *Sittengeschichte*, i. 451.
[2] *Anthol. Graeca*, vii. 691; Friedländer, ibid.

Antigone. Plutarch speaks of women and of the married life in very much the tone of a refined and kindly English gentleman.

The Roman noble was a fitting mate for his haughty spouse; and his position was, to our modern notions, even more extraordinary. Every Roman family was an empire within the empire, and the *paterfamilias* was ruler, judge, and, when he thought proper, executioner of his wife, children, and slaves. A remarkable case in point is that of Pomponia Graecina, who, in the year 57, was accused of attachment to 'a foreign superstition[1].' Nero, following the usual practice, remitted the matter to her husband, A. Plautius, the conqueror of southern Britain; he in due form called together his kinsmen, heard the evidence and acquitted her. He might have put her to death, but this great noble and stout soldier was probably very fond of his wife, and seems to have been minded that his Pomponia should believe what she pleased and not be troubled by a crew of vile informers. She was very possibly a Christian; but, whether she was so or not, the facts show how easily Christianity might find shelter within the walls of the Roman palaces. It is probable that Pomponia was 'in the hand' of her husband, and had been married under the old rules, but the new form of marriage also was capable of being worked to the advantage of

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 32.

the Church. Justin Martyr[1] tells us of a woman who was afflicted with a profligate wretch of a husband. She divorced him, and thereupon he accused her to the prefect of the city, as a Christian, which indeed she was. She appealed to the Emperor, who gave her leave to 'settle her affairs' before making her answer on the capital charge. In order to settle her affairs, she had to recover her dowry from her husband, and, as he could not pay, the charge fell to the ground. No doubt this was what the Emperor intended. Thus the dowry sheltered the wife, even when the husband was a worthless man who hated her. In both these cases, and in others that are known to us, Caesar appears to have been quite willing to protect women of position from religious persecution, and very few ladies suffered for the faith. They were shielded by the house-father even when he was a pagan. Lanciani gives us an inscription of the second century written on the tomb of a daughter, of whom the father says that 'she was a pagan among pagans, a believer among believers[2].' Probably she was the child of a mixed marriage who had done her best, in sweet girlish ways, to keep the peace between a pagan father and a Christian mother.

But the *patria potestas* had another side. It was the unquestioned right of the father to decide which of his children should be permitted to live, and he

[1] *Apol.* ii. 2.

[2] *Pagan and Christian Rome*, p. 15.

exercised this right very freely. Infanticide was extremely common, especially in families of limited means. Superfluous children were just cast into the street, as soon as they were born. In the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* we have a pleasant chatty note from a husband in Alexandria to his wife and sisters at home. Among other things he speaks of an expected infant; 'if it is a boy,' he says, 'let it be; if it is a girl, throw it out[1].' The poor little creatures did not invariably perish, for there were people who made a trade of collecting foundlings and rearing them as slaves. There were baby-farms to which they could be sent for this purpose. In the same papyri we find an account of a law-suit arising out of this practice[2]. One Syrus picked up a baby 'in the gutter,' and put him out to nurse with a woman named Saraeus who had a little child of her own. The foundling died, and thereupon Syrus swore before the magistrate that the dead child was the woman's and the living was his. The destiny of these waifs, especially if they were girls, may readily be imagined; yet sometimes they managed to make for themselves a place in the world. Out of twenty eminent grammarians, or, as we should say, professors or masters of the great public schools, enumerated by Suetonius, two had been exposed by their parents. Ten per cent. of the Roman Keates and Arnolds had risen from this beginning. Consider

[1] *Oxyr. Pap.* iv, no. 744. [2] *Oxyr. Pap.* i, no. 38.

again the moral complications which might easily arise from this state of things.

Yet, notwithstanding the prevalence of this abominable custom, we find in the monuments abundant evidence of parental affection. We have an inscription on the grave of one Marcellinus who committed suicide on the death of his little son [1], and *parentes infelicissimi* is a most common phrase upon the tombs of children. Let me give you three instances out of a great many. One occurs in the epitaph of a little boy. 'The joker of his grandmother, because he used to call her his nurse, the staff of her great age; the joker of his uncle, because he was so sweet to him; and he used to delight his grandfather with his little voice, so that all the neighbours would say O sweet Titus [2].' On a girl of fifteen; 'My little life, thou hast forsaken thy unhappy mamma [3].' On a little girl who did not live to complete her second year; 'I gave my mother and father grief, before I threw my arms round them, before I could please my mother and father [4].' These

[1] *CIL.* iii. 6082.

[2] *CIL.* vi. 3. 18086.

[3] *CIL.* vi. 4. 25808 'Destituisti vitilla mea miseram mammam tuam.'

[4] *CIL.* vi. 4. 26544. See also vi. 3. 22251, on Marsidia Agathemeris, an old lady of seventy, wrapped up in her twin daughters and her grandson. Her only trouble was that one of her daughters had died before her. This was always regarded as a great grief. Constantly we find the phrase 'I have done for my child what my child ought to have done for me.' It may be noticed here that life seems to have been very short in Rome. I have taken the average of

words are not conventional; they are cries from the heart which all parents will recognize.

The practice of infanticide, ruinous as it was to the Empire, was so deeply rooted in the ancient law of the home that even Constantine did not venture to prohibit it. In 374 Valentinian made it penal, bringing it under the general law of murder. But earlier emperors, alarmed by the growing tendency of the population to decline, had attempted to stem the evil by the establishment of what are known as the 'alimentary institutions[1].' This form of charity began with Nerva, and continued to be much in fashion till the time of Alexander Severus. The example of the Emperor was readily followed by private donors, and in every large town there were landed estates, from the rents of which a monthly allowance, equivalent to the price of four or five bushels of wheat, was made to poor boys or girls under the age of sixteen. The object was, of course, to render infanticide unnecessary, but little good seems

500 lives recorded consecutively (vi. 3. 17571–19143). Of these 181 died under ten, and 113 between ten and twenty. Two lived to be over seventy; eleven over eighty; three over ninety. In Africa (*CIL.* viii. 1) instances of longevity are much more common. Between nos. 342 and 439 occur three centenarians, five non-agenarians, and ten octogenarians. As to other provinces I have kept no count.

[1] See Friedländer; Seeck; Schiller, *Kaisergeschichte*; Hatch, *Bampton Lectures*, ed. 1882, p. 34. Full references will be found in these authorities.

to have been accomplished. The relief was inadequate; and, amid the growing disasters of the time, the rents were often misappropriated, or confiscated, or destroyed. Constantine undertook to maintain necessitous children at the expense of the fiscus, but still the law of Valentinian was needed, and even this was probably not strictly enforced. The evil endured till the destruction of the Western Empire by the Germans, who had always regarded child-murder with natural abhorrence. The Church, it need hardly be said, had condemned it from the very first in the strongest possible terms.

Another great domestic relation is that of master and slave. On this subject there is little that is new to be said, but the institution of slavery had such deep and wide-reaching moral effects that it cannot be passed over without some notice.

The first thing that strikes us is the enormous number of the slaves. The richest men would possess as many as twenty thousand, of whom from four or five hundred to a thousand would be attached to their palaces in Rome, while the remainder were agricultural labourers scattered about upon their vast estates. I do not know that there are any trustworthy statistics as to the relation of the two classes, but it is probable that the number of slaves and freedmen greatly exceeded that of the freeborn. And the evil went on increasing. From the second century onwards we

begin to hear of a class of serfs or villains, who were *adscripti glebae*, and slaves in all but name. Gradually the bulk of the rustic population appear to have sunk into this miserable condition [1].

In the Roman Empire the slave was for the most part of the same colour, and practically of the same race, as his master. No attempt was ever made to prevent his education; on the contrary, skill in a handicraft, in the management of business, in art, even in erudition and intellectual accomplishments generally, was held greatly to increase his market value. The natural consequence was that, being helped by the favour, the confidence, the capital of his master, the slave or freedman flooded every kind of employment. There was no dignity, not even the throne itself—for the Emperor Pertinax was of servile descent—to which the son or grandson of a slave might not attain; and the arts and crafts, the trades and professions were full of them. So great were the advantages enjoyed by the slave that freeborn provincials not uncommonly made themselves slaves to some great Roman, in order to be emancipated by him, and thus secure the franchise and his patronage [2].

All this is in a sense greatly to the credit of Roman

[1] For the *Coloni*, *Inquilini*, *Laeti*, see Seeck and Schiller.

[2] Petronius, *Cena*, 57 'ipse me dedi in servitutem et malui civis Romanus esse quam tributarius.' See Friedländer's note on the passage.

liberality. No effort was made to keep the slave down, and those of the better class obtained their freedom easily and in great numbers. Yet the slave or freedman was always regarded with contempt, and not without reason[1]. There was no doubt a vast difference between the trained and capable man who had written Caesar's despatches or managed the great estates of a senator, and the stupid Dacian who tended the lord's cattle in the mountains, shackled by day and locked up in the *ergastulum* by night, lest he should run away or murder the overseer. But in all cases the yoke was degrading, and left its mark upon the neck. For years there had been nothing between the slave and the scourge but the good humour of his

[1] Even St. Basil writes rather hardly of the vices of slaves, *Epp.* 115. But take this epitaph, engraved by one freedman on the tomb of another, *CIL.* vi. 3. 22355, 'Between thee and me, my most holy fellow freedman, I am not conscious that there was ever any division. I call gods above and gods below to witness that I met thee first in the auction room, that we were emancipated by the same master; and nothing would ever have parted us but this thy fatal day.' The great bulk of those inscriptions which give frank expression to natural affection or religious beliefs appear, if we may judge by the names, to emanate from the servile or the enfranchised class. Many distinguished Bishops, Clement, Pius, Callistus of Rome, probably also Ignatius and Polycarp—not to go beyond the second century—had the same origin. What is said in the text must not be harshly interpreted. Cringing, domineering, and credulity are marks of the yoke, and these were probably all but universal. Lying, drunkenness, impurity, and dishonesty are also marks, worse, but not so universal.

owner, and the master's order had been his one standard of right and wrong.

The Roman slave down to the time of Hadrian was absolutely at the mercy of his master, and even after that date had no more civil rights than the American negro before the Civil War. In other respects he was far better off. But the same circumstances which gave him a career, his white skin and his education, made slavery, as an institution, infinitely more demoralizing. To this cause we may trace the cringing servility which began with the first institution of Caesarism, assumed the basest Oriental shape under Aurelian, Diocletian, and the Christian Emperors, and corrupted political life from top to bottom. Every authority, of Caesar, or governor, or magistrate, or tax-gatherer—I am afraid we must even say of bishop —was moulded upon the same bad analogy. Some scholars are inclined to think that the rapid decline of literature and art is in part due to the fact that so many of their professors came from the servile class. The dignity of work was lost, because paid labour was thought unworthy of any freeborn man. And as for sexual morality, what can it have been when the mass of the people were slaves, when slaves were incapable of marriage and the number of men greatly preponderated over that of women, when women and boys had no protection at all against their masters [1],

[1] 'Nec turpe est quod dominus iubet' had been Trimalchio's rule

when impurity was not denounced by philosophy, and was encouraged by some of the many forms of religion? Certainly we cannot be surprised when we are told that throughout imperial times the old population was steadily dying out. Salvian regards unchastity as one of the main causes of the ruin of the Empire.

Let us pass here to another important topic—that of amusements.

Duelling, if we call that an amusement, did not exist among the ancients. Drunkenness and gluttony were probably not so mischievous in the old world as in modern England. Nor was gambling. We read little about betting except in connexion with the circus, which did not exist outside of the capital. Games of chance were very popular, and among an excitable people would lead no doubt to a good deal of quarrelling, but we very seldom read of men ruining themselves over the dice-box. A Christian treatise of uncertain date, known as the *de Aleatoribus*, de-

(*Cena*, 75). Friedländer quotes Haterius in Seneca, *Controv.* iv. pr. p. 378, 9 Burs. 'impudicitia in ingenuo crimen est, in servo necessitas, in liberto officium.' But Haterius was expressing the wholesome old Roman sentiment when he said that unchastity was *crimen in ingenuo*. Epictetus (*Enchir.* xxxiii. 8) says *περὶ ἀφροδίσια εἰς δύναμιν πρὸ γάμου καθαρευτέον· ἁπτομένῳ δὲ ὧν νόμιμον μεταληπτέον. Μὴ μέντοι ἐπαχθὴς γίνου τοῖς χρωμένοις, μηδὲ ἐλεγκτικός· μηδὲ πολλαχοῦ τὸ ὅτι αὐτὸς οὐ χρῇ παράφερε.* The Stoic maxim was *qui vitia odit homines odit* (Pliny, *Epp.* viii. 22), and this rule of tolerance was applied to the most abominable vices.

nounces the vice with great vehemence, but the author would have found much more to say if he had lived in the eighteenth century, or indeed in our own time. Gambling was condemned under the Empire both by law and by public opinion; and gambling debts were never regarded as debts of honour[1]. There were no Monte Carlos and no lotteries. Even commercial speculation, 'rings,' 'corners,' and all other devices for enhancing prices, especially of food, were regarded with a very severe eye by the Roman jurists. But though this is true, the amusements of the ancient world form one of the darkest blots upon its moral character. As to their quality we may say that the

[1] The Roman law on the subject of gambling will be found in the *Digest*, xi. 5. Juvenal, i. 88 sqq., speaks of losing 100,000 sesterces (about £1,000) at a sitting as something quite outrageous, and he is speaking of a time when all the vices were at their worst. In the fourth century Ammianus Marcellinus, xxviii. 4. 21, says that there was much dice-playing among the Roman nobility, that those who indulged in the pastime called themselves *tesserarii*, not *aleatores*, 'though there is no more difference between the two words than there is between *thief* and *robber*,' and that a good player was much in request at social gatherings and was affronted if a proconsul received more attention than himself. In the fifth century the friends of Sidonius Apollinaris constantly played at dice when it was too hot to play at ball, or when they were too old for violent exercise. They amused themselves in this way between two services in church; *Epp.* v. 5. But Sidonius never speaks of any stakes; his dice-playing was as harmless as backgammon or dominoes. Even Ammianus, though he looks upon play as an unworthy occupation for a man of rank, does not complain of its ruinous consequences.

circus was bad, the theatre was worse, and the arena was altogether detestable [1]. Their cost was gigantic, and formed a terrible burden on the coffers of the state and of individuals. It has been computed that more than a million a year of our money was spent upon gladiators alone, without taking Rome itself into

[1] For details as to the *Schauspiele* it is sufficient here to refer to Friedländer. There are but three passages in which heathen writers express anything like an adequate condemnation of the vile gladiatorial shows. Seneca, *Epp.* i. 7, speaks with great disgust of the exhibition of *meridiani*; this was a mere butchery. Pliny, *Epp.* iv. 22, tells us that the *gymnicus agon* at Vienna in Gaul was abolished by Trebonius Rufus. As money had been bequeathed for the purpose, there was an appeal to Trajan, the good emperor, who celebrated his Dacian triumph by sending 10,000 prisoners of war into the arena (Dio Cassius, lxviii. 15). Mauricus, when called upon for his opinion, said 'I wish such shows could be abolished at Rome also.' The Council upheld the action of Trebonius. In Lucian, *Demonax*, 57, we read how Demonax advised the Athenians to pull down the altar of Pity before they gave a gladiatorial show in their town. But the excellent Symmachus, *Epp.* ii. 46, ed. Seeck, was reduced to the verge of despair by the outrageous conduct of thirty-nine Saxon captives, who strangled one another in their prison rather than go into the arena, and thus spoiled the magnificent show which he was giving in honour of his son's praetorship. He speaks almost with tears of the 'impious hands' of those wretches who were 'worse than Spartacus.' Augustine, *Conf.* ix. 8, describes the horrid intoxication which came over Alypius when first he saw blood flow in the amphitheatre. Constantine forbade gladiatorial shows, but his edict remained a dead letter. Early in the fifth century the Christian poet addressed to Honorius the fine line 'Nullus in urbe cadat cuius sit poena voluptas' (*contra Symm.* 1125). Shortly afterwards Telemachus, an Eastern monk, lost his life in trying to part the swordsmen, and these wicked displays were then finally abolished.

the account, and in the capital, at one time, shows of one kind or another were given on more than half the days in the year. The spectators assembled before dawn and sat in their places till the fall of night. Such a state of things is unparalleled in the history of the world, and the evil consequences of every kind must have been immense. Nor can we say in excuse that there was no other kind of amusement. On the contrary, life must have been much more agreeable in the ancient town, with its baths, fountains, basilicas, parks, libraries, its profusion of works of art, its guild meetings, processions, feasts, athletic sports, musical and rhetorical competitions, above all its climate—for the greater part of the Empire lay in the lands of the sun—than it has ever been since. These colossal and hideous shows of the amphitheatre were provided gratis in addition to an extraordinarily large measure of other and more innocent enjoyments.

This huge expenditure on amusements and the consequent and equally huge expenditure on food, clothing, and doles of money for the vast multitude of the unemployed, this socialism run mad, as we may call it, working in the same direction with a system of education which stifled all zeal for improvement, and a despotic government which treated even desire for improvement as a crime, combined to produce that amazing fiscal mismanagement which displays

its evil fruits as early as the reign of Trajan. It grew worse and worse till the very end. We may trace its results very clearly in the gradual ruin of the *curiales* or town councillors[1], that is to say of the respectable middle class, all over the Empire, and in the gradual formation of an iron system of castes. As to the latter, it may be observed that the notion of hereditary obligation was applied with most rigour to just those occupations which were necessary for the maintenance of the shows and the doles, to the *curiales* who were responsible for the taxes, to the

[1] For the downfall of the *curiales* the reader should consult Dill or Seeck; it forms the most instructive and melancholy chapter in the history of imperial Rome. Even in the time of Pliny we hear of men who were compelled to serve as decurions, and by the end of the second century the office seems to have been regarded as nearly synonymous with ruin (*Digest*, 50. 2, 4, 5). These officials had to discharge mainly at their own expense a long list of *munera*, including all, and much more than all, that in modern England is provided out of the rates (see the list of *munera* in *Digest*, 50. 4). In the time of Diocletian the *curiales* were further obliged to make good the deficits in the imperial budget, which were always large (Seeck ii. 190). Under the Christian emperors matters grew worse and worse (*Cod. Theod.* xii. 1). Men caught at every means of escape from the intolerable burden, sometimes endeavouring to rise above it, by purchasing a title or dignity that would exempt, sometimes flying abroad into the country of the barbarians, or making themselves serfs to some powerful noble. Many ran away to the monasteries in the desert; this was forbidden by a law of Valens in 373 (*Cod. Theod.* xii. 1. 63; the date is not certain). Others endeavoured to get themselves ordained. The relation of the *curia* to the Church is so interesting that I have ventured to make it the subject of an excursus, which follows this lecture.

cultivators of the soil who grew the wheat, to the shipmasters who carried it to Rome or Constantinople, to the bakers who made the bread, and to all sorts of theatrical people. Thus every career was blocked except the bar, the civil service, and the army, and of these the bar was largely occupied in the conduct of oppressive suits against defaulters to the treasury, and the civil service was screwing taxes out of people who could not pay, while the chief places in the army fell more and more to German or Scythian barbarians. The state of things in the Empire, especially in Christian times, was worse than that in France just before the Revolution. The senators were enormously wealthy, and stood practically above the reach of the law; the people were exceedingly poor. The rich shoved off their burdens on to the shoulders of the poor; the poor were ground down by heavy and ill-adjusted taxation, and by still heavier *corvées*, and were harried to desperation by a host of greedy and corrupt officials. Salvian tells us that the advent of the barbarian conquerors was in many places hailed with joy, and this is probably true[1]. Indeed we may think that, if it had not been for that great revolution, the Empire would have sunk into a condition not unlike that of China. The literati and officials of

[1] Salvian may be called the ancestor of our Christian Socialists. A good account of him will be found in Mr. Dill's book, but he well deserves to be read in the original.

the time of Sidonius Apollinaris are, in many curious points, very similar to mandarins[1].

It should be added finally, that as the number of barbarians in the Empire increased—from the time of Marcus Aurelius onwards—the old Roman virtues disappear. I must not dwell upon the point, though it is one of great interest; let it suffice just to notice two facts—the growing barbarity of punishment inflicted by law and sanctioned by popular opinion, and the prevalence of treason, not merely in the shape of conspiracies against the Emperor, but as a legitimate weapon against an enemy in open war. The disgraceful treachery of Count Boniface, who called the Vandals into Africa to gratify his spite against the Empress Placidia, is characteristic of his age and would have been impossible in the old heathen times.

All this will help to make clear to us the nature and the magnitude of the task which lay before the Church, and to enable us to judge with equity the degree of her success.

It was in the field of private morality that she accomplished most. She regarded it rightly as her first and principal duty to purify the soul of the

[1] This remark will justify itself to any one who, after reading the *Epistles* of Sidonius, will turn to that most amusing and instructive Chinese novel, *Les deux Cousines*, translated and judiciously abbreviated by M. Rémusat.

individual, and draw him into brotherly communion with his fellow believers. By what means she effected this aim may be read best perhaps in the *Didascalia*, to which reference has already been made, and in Dr. Harnack's instructive volume *die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*. Later on, the great ascetic movement of the fourth century was a strenuous effort in the same direction. That movement was no doubt open to criticism; and it has been much debated whether the Church did not hasten the downfall of the Empire by calling soldiers away from the standard, officials from the administration of the state, and large numbers of excellent men and women from their social duties into what may seem the sterility of the cloistered life. I think we may say three things; first, that we must not condemn flight from the world without fully knowing what that world was from which the ascetic fled; second, that a monk like St. Martin of Tours, in the circumstances of the time, probably rendered far greater services to his generation than he could have done in any other capacity; third, that what is true is that the Church did not prevent, nor even retard, the downfall of the Empire. That Christianity in itself did not sap the forces of the state is evident from the fact that the victorious Germanic invaders were, for the most part, Christians themselves.

But, if we turn our eyes to the field of public virtue,

then it must be acknowledged that the Church produced very little result indeed. The evils which were destroying the body politic went on unchecked, and the process of deterioration was more rapid than ever under the Christian emperors.

It would be unjust to hold the Church accountable for this decline. The real root of the mischief was the entire absence of any form of popular representation in the government, and the sufficient causes of this radical defect are to be found in the heterogeneous character of the Empire, and in its gradual degradation of tissue, as the barbarian element in the population increased. It is important to notice that the Church was never, in any real sense of the word, established. Certain judicial powers were given to the bishop, but the great ecclesiastics were never formally admitted to the councils of the Empire. They were shut out from all imperial responsibility, and from all chance of gathering political wisdom. They were relegated, not entirely against their own will, to the domains of theology and ethics, and this sharp division between the secular and the spiritual produced very unfortunate results both in State and Church. A great bishop, such as St. Basil or St. Ambrose, would resist the Emperor with dauntless courage in a matter of orthodoxy or of clerical privilege; an exceptionally great bishop would even rebuke an emperor for his personal misdeeds, thus

St. Ambrose excommunicated Theodosius for the massacre of Thessalonica, and vehemently protested against the judicial murder of Priscillian by Maximus. Every good bishop regarded himself as a sort of unofficial *defensor plebis*[1]. The writings of Basil and Synesius in the East, and of Sidonius Apollinaris in

[1] Not quite unofficial. A law of Honorius and Theodosius enacted in 409 (*Cod. Theod.* ix. 3. 7) directs that a judge shall visit the town jail every Sunday, listen to the prisoners' complaints, see that they are properly fed and washed (they are to be taken to the public bath under charge of the jailer), and generally treated with humanity. The Bishop is to take care that the visiting justice does his duty. 'Nec deerit antistitum christianae religionis cura laudabilis, quae ad observationem constituti iudicis hanc ingerat monitionem.' See Godefroi's note upon this law; Seeck, ii. 175, 529. But the power of the Bishop was very limited. He could not directly inhibit the action of a magistrate, as we learn from the story of Synesius and Andronicus. In the case of a very glaring injustice he might excommunicate, but this was a perilous and almost unheard-of course. Constantine granted the Bishop an extensive and rather indefinite jurisdiction, but it certainly did not include actions in which the rights of the crown were involved. It was exercised by St. Basil; but it was a consensual jurisdiction, and was always difficult to assert against the claims of the imperial judges. See the *Epistles*, 225, 237, 270, 286, 289. Cases of abduction, slander, and theft or misappropriation of church property are here in question. In *Ep.* 289 (a slander case) Basil tells us that his rule is not to hand over offenders to the secular court, but not to claim them if they have been indicted before a secular court. In the West, a little later, St. Ambrose maintains the exemption of clerics from secular jurisdiction, but he is speaking only of cases involving the faith, or ecclesiastical property (*Ep.* 21). See the Appendix to the *Codex Theod.* in Godefroi and Sirmondi; Eus. *V. C.* iv. 27; Seeck, i. 63, 473 and ii. 180.

the West, show us how manfully they would strive for redress in individual cases of oppression by bad governors. Many of the Gallic bishops, at the time of the invasion, fed large masses of destitute people; some even led, or encouraged, armed resistance to the barbarians. In that catastrophe the bishops showed themselves better men and better citizens than any other class. But, so far as I know, no one ever ventured to criticize the system through which all these evils had come to pass, except Salvian, a priest of South Gaul, and he was wise after the event, and could safely defy an emperor who was no longer his sovereign.

The Church, which lived among the poor, knew far better than any one else the moral and social evils that afflicted the state, and the fiscal and other injustices by which they were caused or intensified. But she was not allowed to utilize her experience. It is probable also that she did not really grasp the meaning of her experience, partly from defective education, partly because she was compelled to rely too exclusively on the clergy, partly also because asceticism, which regarded the service of the world as the service of the devil [1], warped her view, and

[1] Paulinus of Nola expresses this sentiment very strongly; *Ep.* viii 'Quanta etenim coelo et terris distantia, tanta est Caesaris et Christi rebus et imperiis'; *Ep.* xxv 'Quodsi magis dilexerimus hoc saeculum et maluerimus Caesari militare quam Christo, postea non ad Christum

prevented her from even conceiving the idea of a Christian statesman.

Two reflections appear to be forced upon us. One is that orthodoxy, and even private virtue, will not save a state that is rotten at the core. The other is that under the rule of the Christian emperors the Church still continued to do exactly what she had done in the days of Decius and Diocletian, palliating by charity the evils inflicted by injustice, like the Good Samaritan, or like an ambulance in the train of an army. It was a noble office, and it was nobly fulfilled. Only in quite modern times have we begun to understand that there is a still higher conception of Christian duty, that the private virtues cannot flourish

sed ad gehennam transferemur, ubi principum huius mundi uertitur causa.' On the other hand, when the wretched Boniface told Augustine and Alypius that he wanted to be a monk, they replied that he would render greater service to the Church of Christ if he would repel the barbarians for the sake of her peace (Aug. *Epp.* 220). Gregory Nazianzen (*Or.* xix. 10) simply exhorts soldiers to follow the precepts of John the Baptist. Basil maintained a friendly correspondence with several officers in the army (*Epp.* 116, 117, 152, 153), begs a friend to accept the office of κηνσίτωρ (*Ep.* 299), and reminds another that in the Eucharistic office the Church prays ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐν ταῖς στρατείαις ἐξεταζομένων (*Ep.* 155). Many Christians appear to have held that when a man had discharged all his civic duties and reached the age of natural and legal exemption he ought then to 'quit the world.' St. Martin of Tours probably served the whole of his time in the army before he became a monk. But the opinion expressed by Paulinus was very widely held and very strenuously preached.

without the public, that religion and policy ought to go hand in hand, and that for the old ideal of Church and State we ought to substitute that new ideal of the Church-State, which hovered before the minds of *Piers Plowman* and of John Wyclif[1], but has not yet been realized.

[1] Wyclif revived in the West the old theocratic belief, which in the East has never disappeared, that the Sovereign is God's deputy, whose sacred office it is to see that all men, clergy, and laity do their appointed duty. In the West it had been broken down by a variety of causes, among which asceticism and the barbarism of the new Teutonic kings were the chief. Papal domination was not so much a cause as another result of these causes. Wyclif's doctrine, which well deserves study, may be found in the prefaces to Mr. Poole's editions of the *de dominio divino* and *de dominio civili*, in the *Select English Works* edited by Arnold, or in Shirley's edition of the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*.

EXCURSUS ON LECTURE IV

THE relation of the *Curia* to the Church is so important, and has attracted so little attention, that it may be worth while to collect passages bearing upon the point.

In the second century Aristides (*Or.* xlvi) complains that Christians will not sit upon the town councils. Celsus makes the same charge (Origen, *Cont. Cels.* viii. 68).

The stricter party in the Church appear to have refused to serve (Tatian, *Or.* xi *δοξομανίας ἀπήλλαγμαι.* Speratus, one of the Scillitan martyrs, says, 'Ego imperium huius saeculi non cognosco.' Min. Felix, viii 'honores et purpuras despiciunt.' Tert. *Apol.* xxxviii 'nec ulla magis aliena res est quam publica'; xlvi 'christianus nec aedilitatem adfectat'). But Tertullian, *de idol.* xvii, lets us see also that there were many who did not agree with him, who were willing to perform their municipal duty, and defended themselves by the example of Joseph and of Daniel. The *Canons of Hippolytus*, about the same date, decidedly supports this more liberal view, and only stipulates that a Christian who takes office shall

discharge his functions conscientiously (ed. Achelis, p. 82).

At first, while a seat upon the town council and a place among the town magistrates was regarded as a high distinction, evasion may have been easy enough, though it would be greatly resented by the burgesses, who depended on the liberality of their magistrates for much of the comfort and nearly all the amusement of civic life. But, towards the end of the second century, service began to be felt as an oppressive burden, and severe laws made it extremely difficult to escape (see Ulpian, in *Digest*, 50). At the outbreak of the Decian persecution there were many Christian decurions in Alexandria (Eus. *H. E.* vi. 41. 11), and no doubt elsewhere, and in the time of Diocletian there were still more (Eus. *H. E.* viii. 1). The Council of Illiberis does not forbid Christians to serve, though it directs that a *duumvir* shall be excluded from church during his year of office (can. 56). The Council of Arles (can. 7) allows a Christian to hold civil office, but admonishes the bishop to watch over him, and 'if he acts against discipline' to excommunicate him.

In the time of Diocletian the town council had sunk so low that enrolment in the *Curia* had become a favourite method of punishment or annoyance. See the law in Migne's *Constantine*, 259. Later on we find complaint that Donatists and Arians managed

to get Catholics punished in this way; it is perhaps an accident that we do not hear of similar complaints on the other side.

In the very beginning of his reign Constantine exempted the Catholic clergy from all *munera*, including the dreaded and hated curial obligation (see *Cod. Theod.* xvi. 2. 1, 2, with Godefroi's Notes), but this concession was seriously modified, indeed practically annulled, by later enactments; thus in 320 a law, repeating an older law which has disappeared, directs that no decurion or person liable to the decurionate shall be ordained, and that, if ordained, he shall be deposed and sent back to the *Curia* (*Cod. Theod.* xvi. 2. 3); and in 326 another law enacts that there shall be no ordinations except to fill death vacancies, that no one shall be ordained who by reason of birth or property is bound to curial service, and that the *Curia* shall have power to lodge a protest against the ordination of any such person (*Cod. Theod.* xvi. 2. 6). To the last law a reason is appended—'opulentos enim saeculi subire necessitates oportet, pauperes ecclesiarum divitiis sustentari'—but the real reason was, as we see from the law of 320, that numbers of people sought for ordination in order to get rid of the curial obligation.

These laws of Constantine, if strictly enforced, would have made ordination impossible except for the senators who were above the curial burden, for the poor who were beneath it, and for the aged who

had discharged their duty and so become exempt. They are quite sufficient to account for the ignorance which is charged against the Eastern bishops by Philostorgius and by Gregory Nazianzen.

The only legal course for a well-to-do plebeian who desired ordination was to make over his property to the *Curiales*, and in this way indemnify them for the loss of his services. But this was naturally felt to be a great hardship, and methods of evasion were attempted; men appear to have made away with their property by some sort of fictitious transfer ('alienatis facultatibus aut in aliorum iura ante transcribtis' are the words of the *Codex*). The Emperor thought it politic to make a compromise, and by a law of Constantius in 361 (*Cod. Theod.* xii. 1. 49) bishops were no longer required to divest themselves of their property. Nor were the inferior clergy, if it appeared on examination before a judge, in presence of the *Curia*, that their purpose to serve God was sincere, and if the whole laity desired their ordination. Otherwise they were obliged to cede two-thirds of their property to some relative who would discharge their curial obligations in their stead, or, in default of such relatives, to the *Curia*. (For a parallel law of the same date see *Cod. Theod.* viii. 4. 7.) Thus the *Curia* retained the right of a negative voice in all ordinations except those of bishops.

Julian the Apostate deprived the clergy of all immunities. After his death Valentinian in 364 re-

verted to the arrangement which had existed before 361; all clergymen were obliged to surrender the whole of their property, only they were allowed to make it over, not to the *Curia*, but to a relation. By a later law of the same reign (*Cod. Theod.* xvi. 2. 19) this was re-enacted, but a proviso was added that no one should be molested who had been in orders for ten years. It is clear from this that there had again been evasions. Even Theodosius the Great repeats the same severe rule (*Cod. Theod.* xii. 1. 104—'quippe animos divina observatione devinctos non decet patrimoniorum desideriis occupari'; cp. same title, 115). But again there were evasions, and again the law was repeated with the addition of a time of grace (*Cod. Theod.* xii. 1. 121, 123).

It is not improbable that these difficulties had been felt in the time of Cyprian, who was a wealthy plebeian, and before his consecration gave away the whole of his property (*Vita*, 15). Certainly at that date the obligation to serve on the town council could not have been avoided in any other way. His house and garden were bought by the brethren and given back to him, but we may suppose that the value of this property did not amount to the curial census, which was generally about £1000. But the most interesting commentary upon the working of the law is supplied by the correspondence of St. Basil.

Basil was ordained priest in the reign of Julian, when all clerical immunities had been abolished. It

is sometimes said that he divested himself of all his property, but what is meant apparently is that from the moment of his conversion he regarded it no longer as his own. We may suppose that he retained legal possession of his estate, but lived an austere life and gave away large sums (see Gregory Nyssen's *Oration on Basil*, pp. 488, 491, ed. Morel, 1638) Thus under Valens he would be liable to be called back to the *Curia*; and this is probably the reason why we find him writing (*Ep.* 190) about 'a dignity' which he is anxious to obtain, even if he has to pay a price for it. The dignity was probably one of those sinecure offices which exempted from service (see Seeck, ii. p. 315). From *Ep.* 192 it would appear that he had obtained what he wanted through the good offices of Sophronius.

In *Ep.* 230 (the date is 375; see Loofs, *Eustathius von Sebaste*, p. 53) Basil writes to the *Curia* of Nicopolis, telling them that the bishops have elected a bishop for their city, and that it is now their business to confirm him. This, as will have been seen, is in strict accordance with the law. Basil does not here speak of any formal recognition of the bishop-elect by the general body of the laity, but in the West certainly three parties were concerned, as we see from *Ep.* 7 of Pope Celestine; 'Nullus invitis detur Episcopus, Cleri, plebis et ordinis consensus et desiderium requiratur.' Indeed in the West the influence of the laity was often predominant in the fourth and fifth centuries, as in the cases of Ambrose, Augustine,

Pinianus—especially in Gaul and Spain, as in the cases of St. Martin, Paulinus of Nola, Sidonius Apollinaris, Simplicius of Bourges, and probably in those of Patiens of Lyons, Volusianus of Tours, Venerandus of Clermont, and Remigius. In the East it has been held that the right of the general laity was taken away by the Council of Nicaea (can. 4), and though this is not strictly correct, yet the vote of the *Ordo* or *Curia* seems to have outweighed and finally, in the time of Justinian, to have superseded it.

But from the present point of view the most remarkable of all Basil's Letters is *Ep.* 104. It was written in 372 to no less a personage than Modestus, the praetorian prefect. In it Basil complains that, whereas the old law (that of 361) granted immunity to all clerics, the new officials have withdrawn the privilege from all who were not over the age of exemption. This act would be in accordance with the law of 364, if the clerics in question had not made due surrender of their estates. He goes on to beg Modestus to grant exemption, not to the persons actually affected, 'for in that case the benefit would pass to their successors, who may not in all cases be worthy of the priesthood.' Godefroi understands 'successors' to mean 'successors in office,' but the meaning appears rather to be 'their sons.' If a clergyman were exempted the privilege would be inherited by his children, who would no longer be 'sanguine curiali districti.' This, Basil argues, would

not be to the advantage of the exchequer, because, as many sons of clergymen would not be ordained, the number of privileged persons would tend to increase. Hence he suggests that the bishop should have power to grant exemption to such persons as in his judgement deserved the relief. We have already, he adds, a somewhat similar power in the case of the ἐλευθέρα ἀπογραφή, alluding, I suppose, to the right of bishops to manumit their own slaves without any witnesses or forms (*Cod. Theod.* iv. 7. 1), and the slaves of other people by merely signing a certificate. If Modestus had adopted this suggestion, Basil would have been able (1) to screen offenders against the law; (2) to ordain as many *curiales* as he liked; (3) to secure a better class of candidates for ordination, and (4) greatly to increase the power of the bishop. But it is obvious that Modestus was not likely to entertain the suggestion.

Basil himself was more of a statesman than perhaps any other ancient bishop, and always showed himself honourably punctilious in the observance of his political relations. A good instance of this trait is to be found in *Epp.* 53, 54. Some of his *chorepiscopi* had been ordaining men who wanted merely to escape military service (this phrase includes not merely enlistment in the army but service in the civil bureaus), and had accepted money for this infraction of the law. Basil deals with the charge promptly and severely, and declares that he will degrade those who so offend again.

These severe laws in restraint of ordination were promulgated, as the reader will have observed, not merely by Constantius and Valens, two emperors of dubious orthodoxy, whom the high-church party regarded as persecutors, but by the great Constantine and the great Theodosius. Under these popular rulers the Church silently accepted measures which, however disagreeable, could yet be justified as necessary to the state.

Here, again, we find an illustration of the miserable condition to which the *curiales* were reduced. Ordination was one of the loopholes through which they sought to escape their burden. It was probably the most tempting and the easiest of all. But, again, the bishops must have been compelled generally to recruit their staffs from those who were beneath the curial degree, that is to say, from the poorest and most ignorant class. Thus the law tended directly to foster worldliness and incapacity among the clergy. Finally we must notice the strong and oppressive grip which the State maintained upon the Church in the palmy days of the Four Great Councils. At no other time have the clergy been reduced to such an Erastian servitude, and this fact helps to explain many painful features of that period.

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